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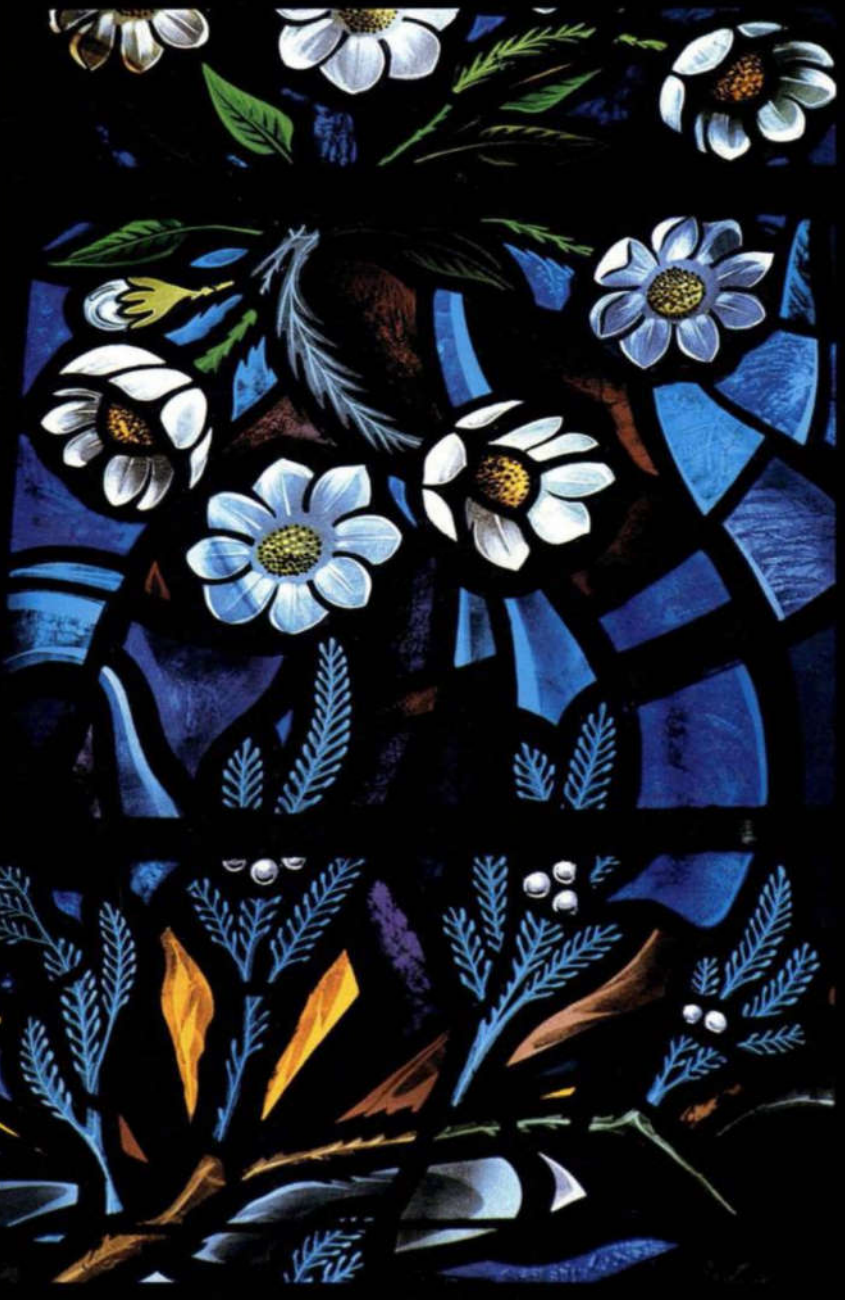

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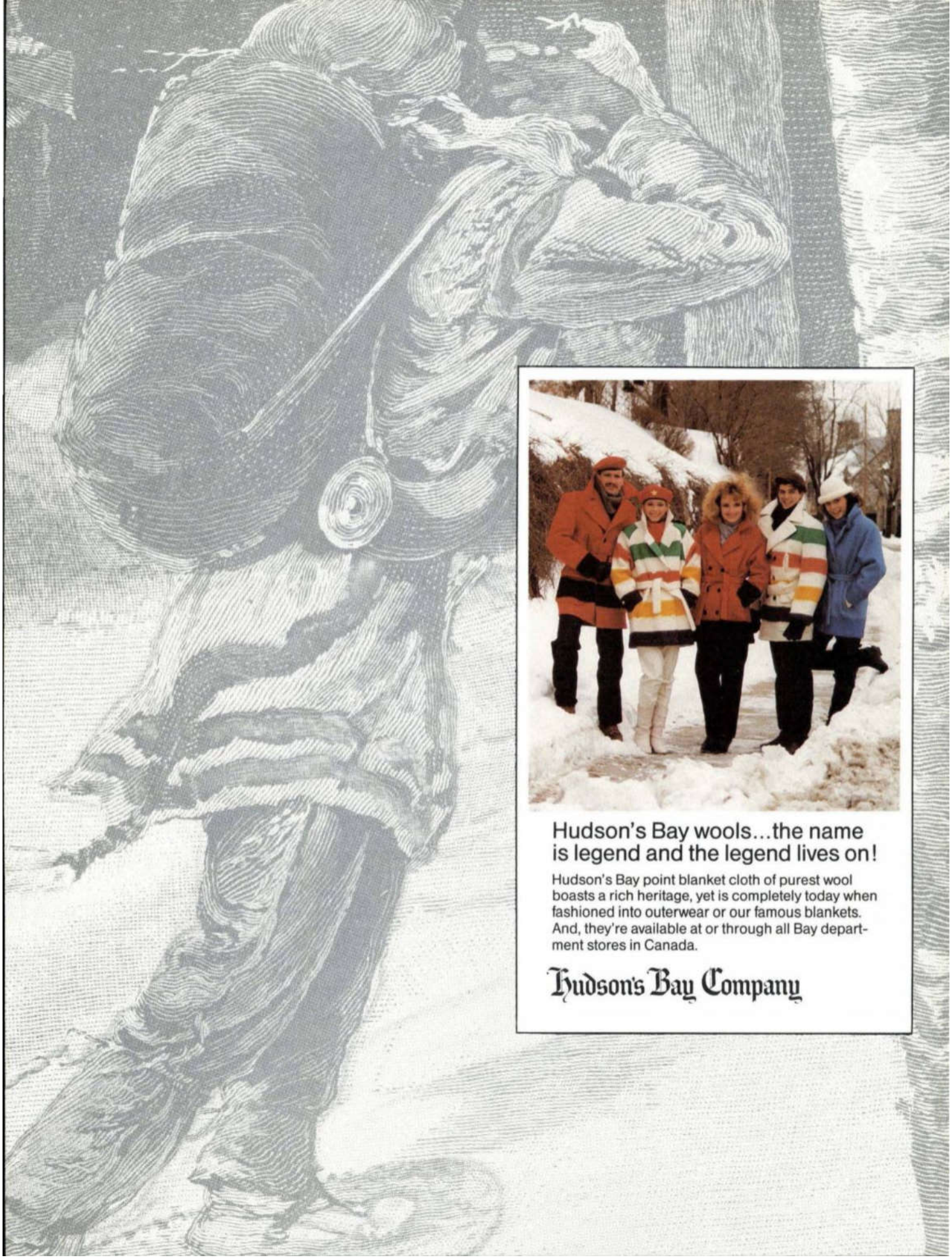

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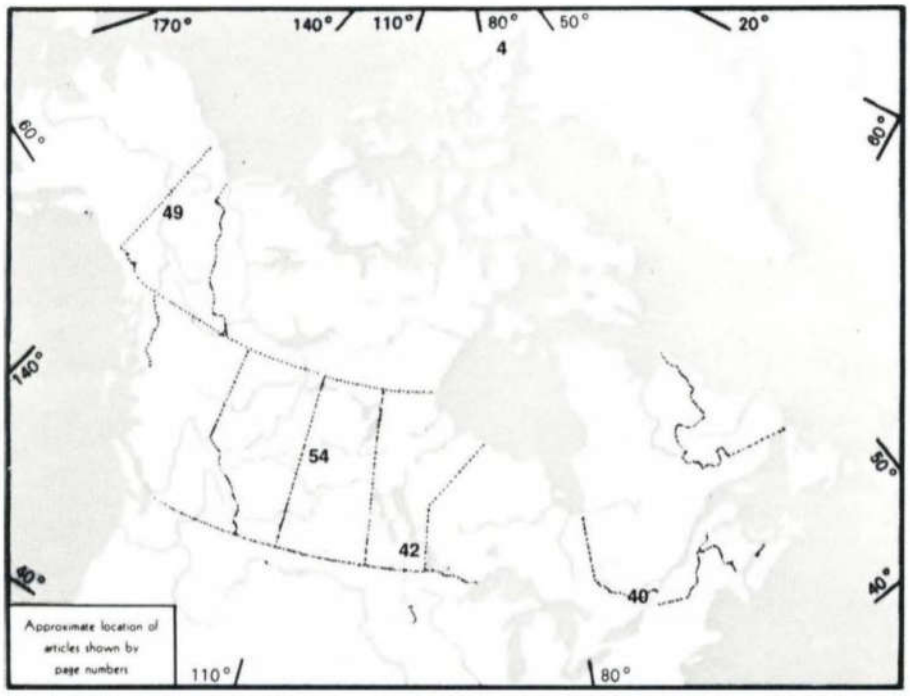

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COVER: Detail from the Northwest Territories window in the House of Commons, Ottawa. A spectacular display of northern wild flowers are featured in this stained-glass mural on the north wall of Parliament. Photograph by Allen D. Macartney.

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Lake Hazen An Arctic Riviera

By Richard Harrington

HOW FAR NORTH do tourists go in Canada? Well, the land mass of Ellesmere Island stretches to within 800 kilometres (about 450 miles) of the North Pole. Tourists who fly to the Pole usually break their flight at Lake Hazen about 4,200 kilometres (2,600 miles) north of Ottawa.

Last August I flew to Resolute Bay (population 250) on Cornwallis Island, N. W. T. (In summer one can fly there direct from Montreal or Toronto without changing planes.) But Resolute is the end of the line. Any travel beyond must be chartered.

The airport itself is an unlovely huddle of low interconnected administrative buildings, hotel and hangars. That first inhospitable impression receded when we — a handful of tourists — left the plane to be greeted by Bezal and Terry Jesudason, owner-operators of High Arctic International Explorer Services. They do outfitting and logistics for scientific parties and tourists, and for adventurers determined to reach the Pole: Finns on skis, Japanese on snowmobiles and dogsleds, or Americans by chartered airplane.

Chatting cheerfully, the Jesudasons drove us to their home, which was also our hostelry en route to Lake Hazen. The house was larger than most in the village, for the benefit of clients. Modern bathrooms with plenty of hot water were a pleasant surprise.

Bezal Jesudason, 43, was born in Madras, one of India's hottest cities, and chose to emigrate to Canada in 1968, expecting to find immediate use for his Bachelor of Science degrees from Madras and Hamburg universities. The best job he could find was as a maintenance engineer at Grise Fiord, a village on Ellesmere Island. There he met and married Terry, a school teacher from Trail, B.C. They moved to Resolute Bay in 1977, to establish their travel and support services.

For our adventure, they had chartered an aircraft from Bradley Air Services of Resolute Bay, a Twin Otter equipped with oversize balloon tires. Everything was loaded into it — camping gear, radio transmitter, food for a week, nine guests and Bezal. The guests included four Americans and myself. Corporal Normand Fradet of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, and his pretty wife Adrienne brought along a couple of house guests and their eight-month-old son Patrick. He was adopted in the Inuit way, when an Inuk mother took compassion on their childless state and gave the Fradets her latest baby.

Cossetted by all of us, he took the trip calmly, as if to say 'After all, it's my country.' Patrick may well have been the youngest person in recorded history to have attained 81°45′ north latitude.

For such was our destination. Lake Hazen in northern Ellesmere Island is about 65 kilometres long and one-tenth as wide, and is said to be the most northerly lake in the world; certainly in the western hemisphere. From the air the lake appeared solidly frozen over, a narrow lane of white amid the tawny hills of the Hazen Plateau. The plateau was streaked with streamlets of summer meltwater.

In the first International Polar Year of 1882-3, the American explorer Adolphus W. Greely made his headquarters (named Fort Conger) at a British Navy base on Lady Franklin Bay on the northeast side of Ellesmere Island. Greely made many sled trips inland, seeing Lake Hazen for the first time at 7:00 P.M. on 30 April 1882:

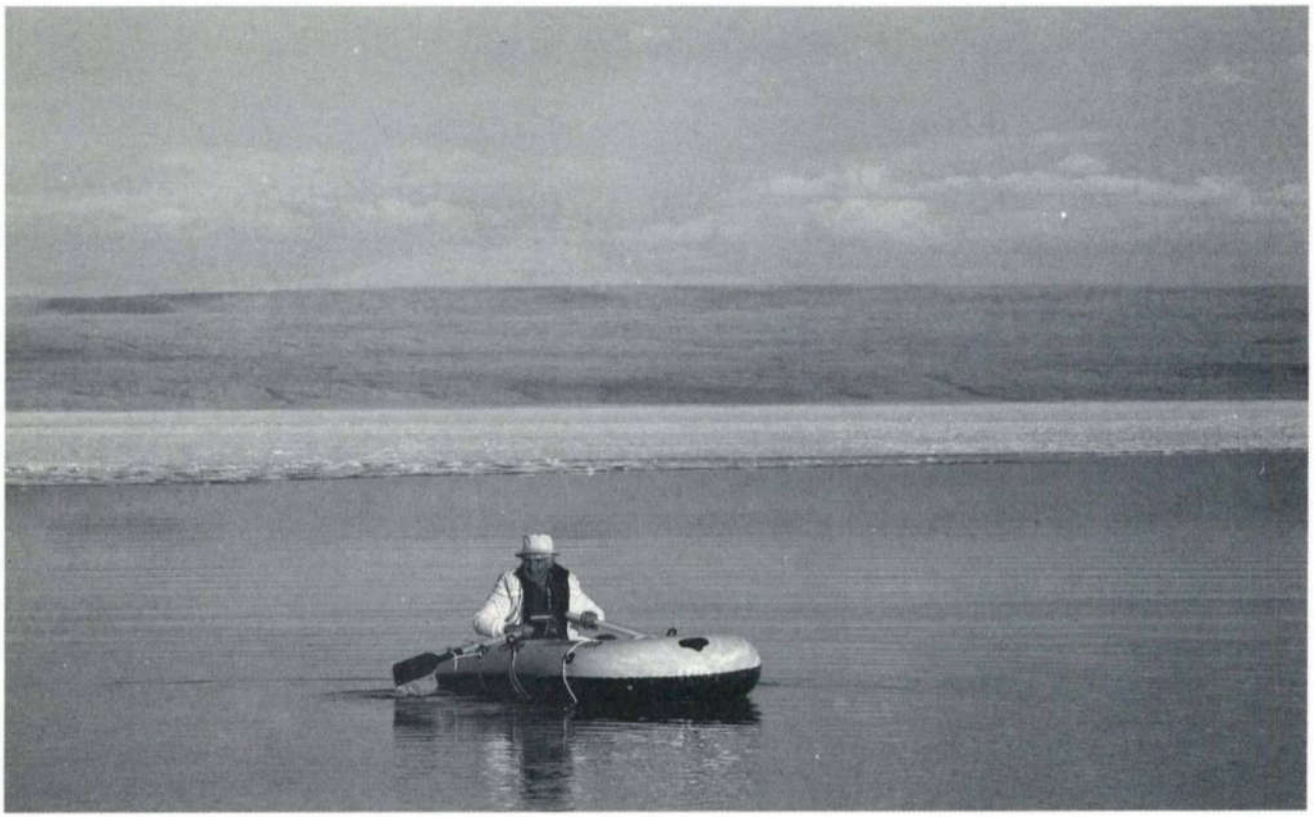
> . . . a scene which we shall all remember to our dying day. Before us was an immense ice-bound lake. Its snowy covering reflected 'diamond dust' from the midnight sun, and at our feet was a broad pool of open blue water which fed the river.

He named the large lake for General W.B. Hazen, Chief Signal Officer in Washington; and gave the maiden name of his wife, Henrietta Nesmith, to a dramatic glacier draining into the lake.

Our Twin Otter bumped down on an almost non-existent airstrip consisting of a gravel bar. Although we were into August, this year the ice had melted only close to shore. The highest temperature (59°F — 15°C) recorded here was in July, 1957. The ice then had gone from the surface of the lake and did not re-form until September. The depth of the lake is said to be 260 metres (almost 800 feet), which is actually below sea level.

Hazen Plateau enjoys a micro-climate several

Photographer-writer Richard Harrington has travelled widely in the arctic countries of the world for close to forty years.



A fisherman in a rubber dinghy tries his luck fishing for arctic char.

degrees warmer than at the precipitous coast. This is the result of air compressing as it flows down from the high mountains inland. In fact, during our six days' stay, the temperature was mostly in the middle 40°F. The land near the lake was free of snow, though the icefields were only 10 kilometres distant, poking glacial fingers in all directions.

Bezal set up camp on the only available stretch of flat well-drained ground, a site first occupied in 1957 for the International Geophysical Year. Since then, various parties of researchers had come and gone, leaving an untidy site. There is little degradability in the cold arid climate. We cleaned up some of the debris, aware that beyond the camp perimeter lay a country little known and totally uninhabited.

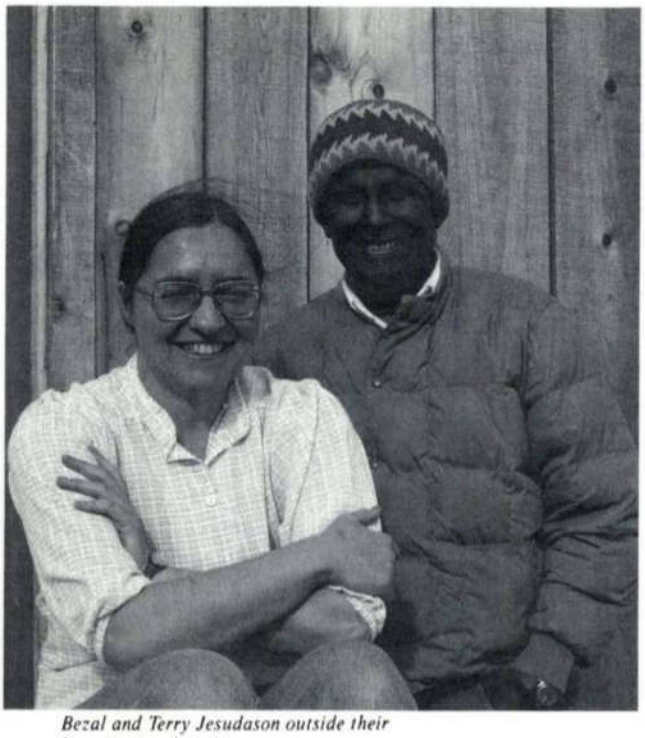
I soon pitched my tent on the shingle close to the water's edge, spread a groundsheet and foam mattress, unrolled a sleeping bag and my cosy shelter was ready. Sam and Claire Coe of Los Angeles were provided a roomy tepee nearby. In this latitude even throughout August, there is dusk but no darkness. Indeed we had sunshine most of the time, and twice on long hikes I walked topless through stands of lush, thick-headed arctic cotton grass *(Eriophorum),* and hardly noticed a mosquito.

To anyone coming this far north, only 140 kilometres (90 miles) from Cape Columbia, the tip of the North American continent, everything is a discovery. Surely only the toughest, most adaptable flora and fauna can survive. Flat rocks and boulders among the heath vegetation are adorned in myriad patterns of lichens in colours whose rosettes range from green through ochre to grey and black.

Though Ellesmere looks barren, there is much to see for a visitor fascinated by form and detail. New discoveries await one climbing any hill. Hillsides often reveal bands of subtle colour — red, pink, yellow, grey and white like a gigantic cake of many thin layers. Fossilized shells to three inches across are imbedded in the shale as well as petrified wood, clear evidence of a different climate.

Sam Coe and I climbed the colourful ridges and saw our camp far below, dwarfed by the immensity of the landscape and the glittering ice of the lake. As we trudged along the bare ridges, suddenly we came upon thousands of perfectly round balls of yellow sandstone, about the size of baseballs. Only a small push would have sent these concretions rolling off the ridge. We resisted that temptation, because to us it was a natural wonder that should not be disturbed. We named it Cannonball Ridge.

We found mushrooms an inch or two in diameter, and a spider blending with the rocks. Two brown and black furry caterpillars curled up at my touch, and



Bezal and Terry Jesudason outside their home in Resolute Bay.

several butterflies flitted from blossom to blossom in a large patch of willow herb which seemed to thrive in the gravel. Four bumblebees flew heavily from one flower to another. Upon looking closely, I found mosquitoes basking inside the sunny shelter of the blossoms, out of the wind. Certainly life was thriving during the brief, bright weeks of summer.

Seventeen species of birds have been found nesting in the Lake Hazen area. I saw small flocks of snow buntings (small birds like juncoes), long-tailed predatory jaegers, snow geese and ptarmigan, and I heard the call of red-throated loons. A long-tailed jaeger was very curious about our presence and doings, and viewed us a long time.

Swift-winged arctic terns angrily swooped down on us, clipping our heads with their pinions when we came too close to their nests.

There must have been unknown billions of gnats buzzing in the chill air above the lake ice or water, for thousands were dead on the ice. The arctic char fed on them in open water. Bezal assured us that there are records of char measuring 80 cm (over two feet) and weighing up to four kilograms (about five pounds). But our two ardent fishermen, though they used casting rods from shore and trolled in the rubber dinghy, had little luck, taking only enough for one breakfast.

I longed to paddle the 400 metres between my tent and Johns Island offshore. The island, named by Greely, is a mile long, a narrow spine of rock. But whenever I was ready to launch forth, a light wind sprang up and in short order the open water disappeared under running ice.

Our days at Camp Hazen were not programmed. We each came and went at will, and at our own pace. There was no organized entertainment, rather an opportunity to be free from schedules and timetables.

A camp routine was quickly established. Bezal strung up a wire between two aerial masts, and kept in daily radio communication with Resolute. He used his own large tent as kitchen, dining-room and lounge, though usually we ate outside perched on folding chairs. He cooked with propane gas, and served tasty steaks, chops, curries and stews with dehydrated vegetables and fresh fruit. I could never quite overcome my surprise at having fresh eggs for breakfast, so many thousands of miles from a hen. I carried an apple or orange, a sandwich and granola bar on hikes. And it was a delight to wander off a few miles. One could not get lost among the naked hills with the lake for orientation.

In sunshine and by contrast with the ice of the glacier cap, the Hazen Plateau might be termed an arctic Riviera. We had only one sprinkle of rain at night, so light it did not dishearten the snow buntings twittering on my roof as they scrabbled for gnats.

I walked into the hills until far off I could see the permanent ice cap, father of a hundred glaciers. High up, I came upon a plant of arctic poppies rising into seedhead. Altogether 114 species of plant life have been identified around Lake Hazen, many of them stunted versions of plants familiar in the south.

None of us sighted wolf, fox, or even caribou, though I did find one antler of the Peary caribou, the most northerly variety of the pale Barren Ground caribou. Smaller than Woodland caribou, these non-migrating animals exist in small bands throughout Ellesmere Island, holding their own against the white polar wolf. Arctic foxes manage to make a living, perhaps because of the abundance of arctic hares. These big fellows, weighing up to four kilograms, are sometimes seen in groups of up to a hundred. The white pelt moults, leaving felts of white fur on the tundra, but does not change colour for the short summer season. The tips of the ears remain black throughout.

Hazen Plateau supports about 200 muskoxen which wander off into the hills in summer. Three times I walked up to within forty or fifty metres of several as they grazed in a seepage meadow. I sat down to eat my pocket lunch, gazing at the shaggy beasts.

They were about the size of a Shetland pony, but densely covered with long dark hair that brushed the ground. They were in moult, and bleached loose hair hung in untidy globs above the new dark growth, and caught in the heathy vegetation. Presently the prehistoric creatures slowly ambled off to a clay hill and calmly lay down overlooking the plain.

I had no wish to disturb them further, but instead

A curious jaeger inspects the campsite.

During July and August, cotton grass covers many acres of low land.

Several species of small butterflies survive on northern Ellesmere Island. Here a moth clings to a pyrola among wintergreen.

Big arctic hares, weighing up to four kilograms live near the lake in groups of up to a hundred.

Willow herb grows in profusion on the shore.

Muskoxen graze on a seepage meadow near Lake Hazen. The Hazen Plateau supports a herd of about 200.

collected handfuls of the *quiviut,* that fine inner wool of immense insulating quality. Soon my pockets bulged, and back in camp, Claire Coe added my offering to her impressive collection. 'I'll spin it and knit you a pair of mitts,' she promised. Sam Coe found a perfect specimen of a muskox skull which he took back to Resolute, where he obtained permission from the Wildlife Service to carry it home to California.

An ancient pathway runs across the foot of Hazen Plateau, now named the Musk Ox Way. Here musk-oxen migrating from the mainland plains to Greenland drifted north and east some 4,000 years ago, when the climate was milder. Primitive hunters trailed them, strewing their artifacts en route through the centuries. Archaeological sites and tools have been found; radio-carbon testing indicates that man lived here 2,500-4,000 years ago.

High rubber boots, I discovered, are best for tundra hiking. Often I had to cross a delta mouth of streams formed by glacial melt, deltas which split into many shallow channels. Everywhere I saw tracks of muskox and wolves and a few caribou; while hare droppings were all over.

Four of our group decided to make a hike south beside the lake to Henrietta Nesmith Glacier. We were joined by Dr Russell Marris of Devon, England, an amateur botanist who had been dropped off by plane at Fort Conger. From there he had hiked inland alone, taking a leisurely ten days to meet us at Lake Hazen.

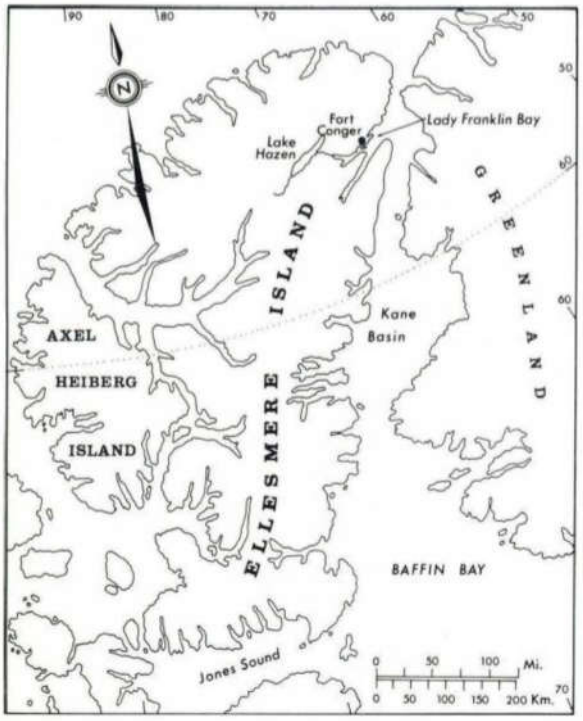
Our tramp to the glacier took us twenty-four hours, with many rests.

The Nesmith Glacier spills from central Ellesmere ice cap to debouch in Lake Hazen. It is full of cracks and crevasses, soiled with dust and exceedingly hard to walk upon. Our party was content to explore the foot of the glacier where they examined a stone cairn erected by the Greely group before the expedition reached its disastrous end. The cairn now held only a recent note informing any readers that the original note left by the explorer was now in the Public Archives, Ottawa. It had weathered to become indecipherable. Our group added a list of their names.

We came back with aching muscles, but happy. Adrienne Fradet celebrated the safe return of her guests with a big carrot cake, lavishly iced. Her husband took over the breakfast on our last day, serving excellent pancakes with butter, maple syrup and sausages.

Soon after, the Twin Otter scrunched down neatly only five minutes before the appointed rendezvous. We knew from Terry's broadcast that skies were overcast at Resolute, while we were in bright sunshine. The pilots were eager to be on their way before the weather could close in. We were reluctant to leave, but already in mid-August we had seen the snowline on the mountains creep lower every morning. Winter would be long and dark on Canada's most northerly island. ♦

Some of the thousands of perfectly round balls of yellow sandstone that have formed on ridges high above the lake.



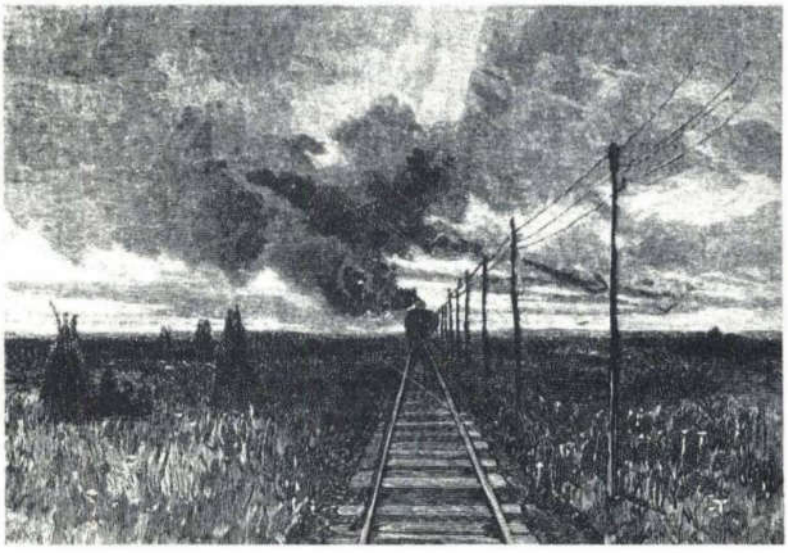
In the summer of 1887, Arthur Robertson, Secretary to Chief Trade Commissioner Joseph Wrigley of the Hudson's Bay Company in Winnipeg, accompanied Wrigley on an extensive tour of fur-trade posts in the Northwest. They travelled by train, buckboard, York boat and steamer, covering 6,051 miles between 23 May and 5 August.

Robertson's journal of the tour is published in three parts by permission of his daughter, Mrs J. S. Hargrave of Vancouver.

Public Archives of Canada

'Breaking Prairie in July, N. W. T. Canada.' A water-colour of the prairie scene, c.1887, by Edward Roper.

Drawing from 'Picturesque Canada' c. 1882.



Geological Survey of Canada

Indian bridegroom, Maple Creek, Saskatchewan, 1884. He holds his rifle to shoot the 'picture maker' if he is hurt by the camera in any way.

Journey to the Far North, Summer 1887

PART I

MONDAY — 23rd May, 1887

At an early hour this morning I left my bed and spent the time until the train started, rushing around procuring odds and ends required for the journey, which had been left over to the last moment.

A time table for our trip had been prepared some months ago and sent to the various officers of the Hudson's Bay Company inland, and it is hoped arrangements will be made so that it will be carried out to a day.

Our party at present is composed of three; viz, the Commissioner of the Hudson's Bay Company [Joseph Wrigley], his son, and myself. We expect Chief Factor [Richard] Hardisty to join us at Edmonton and accompany us through the North. At 9:40 A.M., we got on board the Pullman car 'Australia' on the westbound train and took possession of the sections which had been secured for us beforehand. The Depot Master sounds the gong and shouts 'All on board', the engine bell tolls, and soon we are speeding towards the 'region of the setting sun'. A heavy rain fell all morning, but a couple of hours out from Winnipeg the day brightened up somewhat.

The country is very sparsely settled until nearing Portage la Prairie, but as soon as that town is passed, a marked difference was observed in the number of farms which now dot the prairie, as compared with what it was when I last passed through some two years ago. After the copious showers of last week, the crops are looking splendid and everything augurs well for a bountiful harvest.

At midnight Regina was passed, having made a run of 360 miles. The weather of the first day has been, on the whole, dull and heavy and rather inclined to be cold.

TUESDAY — 24th May

Victoria's natal day — and half the day had passed ere we remembered the fact, and then it was only brought to our recollection by the preparations going on for a horse race and other festivities at one of the small towns on the line of the rail. On turning out of our berths in the morning a perceptible change in the atmosphere was felt and by noon, the thermometer registered 80°[F] in the car.

The time was spent in reading, chatting with some new-made friend, or sitting on a camp stool on the rear platform of the car enjoying the air as we sped along. Scenery, there was none, as all day long we were traversing the vast, arid plain which stretches from Mexico in the south to the banks of the South Saskatchewan in the north.

At Maple Creek I purchased two or three pairs of buffalo horns from Indians and, as it was out of the question to take such bulky articles around with me on the journey, I arranged to have them sent to Winnipeg by express. These horns are picked up on the prairie by the Indians who clean and burnish them and bring them to the railway stations to sell them to the passengers on the daily trains. When nicely polished they make a graceful addition to the hall of a house.

The Indian met with here is of a much finer type than that to be seen in Manitoba and approaches the ideal, which I had formed in my youthful days, of the pristine grandeur of these past lords of the plains, as described by Fennimore Cooper. Tall, well formed, with painted cheeks and greasy hair and clad in his blanket and beaded leggings, he struts about with an air of independence and a self consciousness which seems to say 'my foot is on my native heath'.

The dining cars which are run on the Canadian Pacific Railway deserve special mention. Everything is neat and clean and the cars themselves are in keeping with the luxurious sleeping coaches. Very good meals are generally served on board these cars and, at their worst, they are infinitely better than any to be had at the hotels or eating houses along the route where the train formerly used to stop for half an hour to allow travellers time to have a meal. The well known cry of 'dinner (or breakfast it may be) is now ready in the dining car' which seems to be intoned after the manner of the Episcopal Church, is always welcome, as the meal helps to relieve somewhat the monotony of travel which, no matter what comforts are provided, still forces itself upon the best of travellers. Three meals a day are served costing seventy-five cents each and although we are cooped up in the car deprived of taking exercise, still, we are always ready to do justice to each of them.

At Gleichen, 125 miles from the mountains, the snow-capped peaks were first sighted, but as darkness shortly came on, they were soon again lost to view. Calgary was reached at 11 o'clock and we put up for the night at the Royal Hotel. Since my visit to Calgary two years ago the town has grown considerably. It had then a population of about 1,000 and its buildings were mostly wooden shacks hurriedly erected, whereas now it has more than doubled the population and can boast of many substantial brick and stone buildings. Situated in the centre of the ranching country and being the largest town near the mountains, which contain much mineral wealth only requiring capital to develop, Calgary promises to be a thriving city some day — a Canadian Denver. Calgary is 840 miles from Winnipeg.

WEDNESDAY — 25th May

At five o'clock we were out of bed and by a quarter

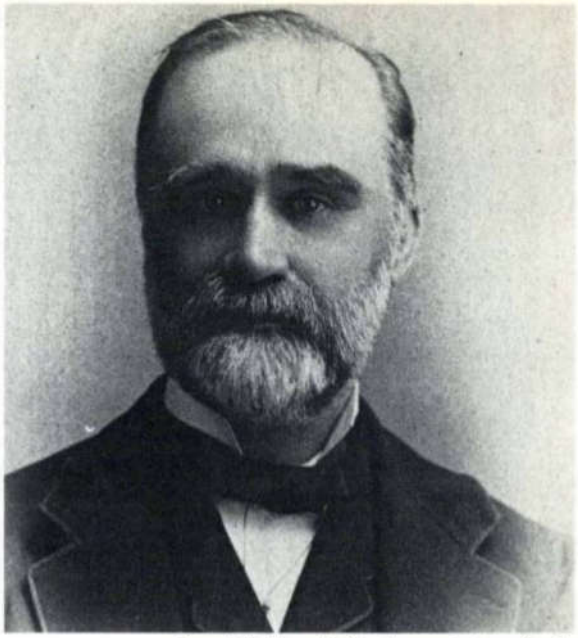
past six we left Calgary and struck north on the Edmonton trail. Although we have many miles before us, our mode of travelling will not now be so rapid and comfortable as that of the last two days; but that receives no consideration and I look forward with pleasure to the experience which will at least be new and interesting, seeing that our way lies out of the path usually frequented by 'globe trotters'.

Our cook and a servant in charge of the camp outfit had been dispatched from Winnipeg to Calgary two or three days before our departure, so that everything should be in readiness for our start north. The parties who had undertaken our conveyance from Calgary to Edmonton, being desirous to send us through as quickly as possible, thought it well that our men should leave Calgary on Tuesday morning in advance of us; and our party, travelling light, would come up with them on the evening of our first day out. The Commissioner's son and myself ride in a spring wagon while the Commissioner has his own buckboard and is accompanied by Mr. [James] Thomson, the Company's Officer at Calgary, who has volunteered to drive his team.

For the first sixty miles the country consists of rolling prairie, destitute of trees but well adapted for ranching. Large herds of cattle were seen browsing on the slopes and one or two flocks of sheep were passed, but sheep raising is not general in this district as yet.

About noon, our attention was called to a couple of vehicles jogging along ahead of us containing travellers who seemed rather out of the ordinary run. On overtaking them we learned that the wife of the Mayor of Calgary, accompanied only by her two little girls and her maid, was on her way to visit some friends at Edmonton, which is distant about 190 miles from Calgary. They will attend to their own horses and make their camp at night and as there is only one horse for each vehicle, the journey will probably take them at least seven days. Here is an instance of the freedom of western life and one which would not excite the slightest comment from the lady's neighbours. A year has not yet elapsed since the mail and several passengers were 'held up' on this route, and a couple of days after the robbery, a murder was committed which was supposed to be the outcome of a dispute among the robbers over the division of the booty. Little episodes like these, however, would appear to be inseparable from a western country, and the lady travellers will have no apprehensions on that account as they are not likely to possess much that would be of value to a highwayman.

About sixty-five miles from Calgary the Rockies become very indistinct and as we continue to go north, they disappear entirely, the range running in a north-western direction. The prairie is now left behind and the country becomes more hilly and lightly wooded. Ducks abound in the numerous lakelets by the roadside



Manitoba Archives

Joseph Wrigley, chief trade commissioner for the Hudson's Bay Company (1884-1894). From a photograph taken in 1887.

and this would seem to be a veritable paradise for a sportsman. We are well armed with shot guns and repeating rifles for large game, but time will not permit us to begin the work of slaughter at present; although a few weeks hence some fresh provisions will no doubt be a welcome addition to our larder.

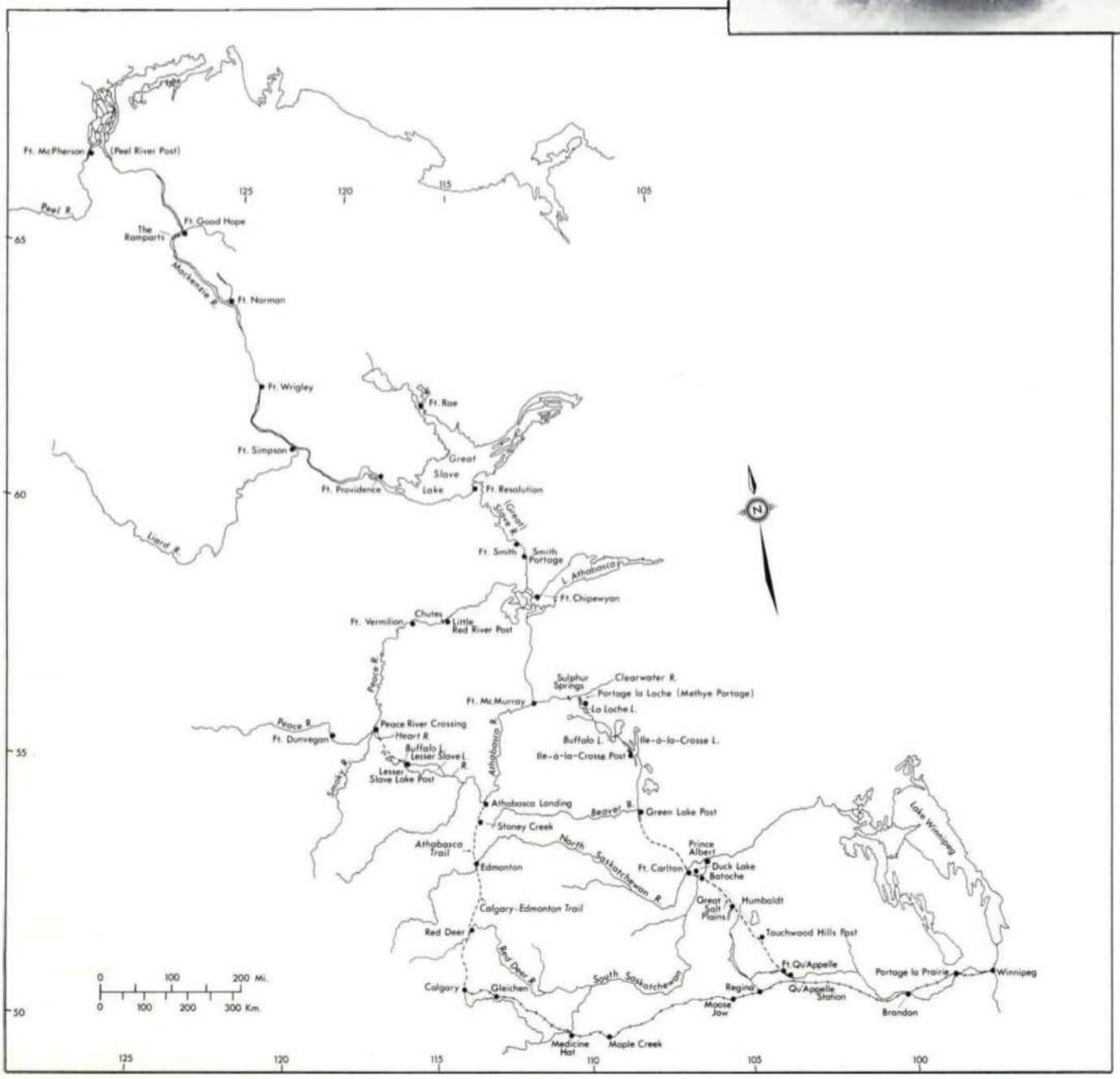
In the evening we crossed on the ferry, the Red Deer River. There is little or no settlement after leaving Calgary until this river is reached, but in this vicinity a considerable number of settlers have lately taken up land and quite a little farming community is fast forming. At half past nine o'clock the Blind Man River was reached where we found our men with our tents pitched ready for the night. Ninety-six miles have been covered since the morning and fully half the distance to Edmonton is done, but the remainder is the worst part of the journey owing to the bad condition of the trail. Horses were changed once during the day, the first teams doing 70 miles. Tomorrow, we will have another change about mid-day. After a hastily prepared supper and discussion around the camp fire, we retired so as to enable us to make an early start in the morning.

THURSDAY — 26th May

At four o'clock the camp was astir and in an hour's time we were again on the trail determined, if possible, to reach Edmonton the same evening. Our servants were left behind to strike the tents and follow at their leisure as, with so much baggage, they will not be able to arrive at Edmonton before Friday. The weather yesterday and today has been all that could be desired for travelling and the trail has proved to be in better condition than expected. Several times during the day we passed trains of freighters with their wagon loads of freight on their way to Edmonton, much after the

The Calgary station, 1888. The carts are laden with furs from Hudson's Bay Company posts in the Northwest valued at $75,000.

Arthur Robertson. Reproduced by permission of his daughter, Mrs J. S. Hargrave.



Calgary, 1887. '. . . promises to be a thriving city someday.' Since Arthur Robertson had visited the town in 1885, the population of about 1,000 had more than doubled.

Geological Survey of Canada

same manner as freighters at no distant date used to wend their way from St. Paul to Winnipeg, or what was then known as the Red River Settlement. At half past seven o'clock on a lovely evening, the high banks opposite the town of Edmonton were reached and before descending to cross the river, we stopped for a moment to enjoy the view. Edmonton is picturesquely situated on the north side of the Saskatchewan River. Clumps of trees enhance the beauty of the place and on a still bright evening such as this, the scene presented was charming and calculated to impress us most favourably after our long drive. The town is scattered along the steep banks; the Hudson's Bay Company's fort, with its stockade, flag staff and guns, is at the extreme west end and occupies a commanding position on the heights. We carefully descended the precipitous path to the river and were conveyed to the other side by the ferry, a salute being fired from the fort in our honour as we crossed. In ten minutes time we were in the fort where, as anticipated, our early arrival had caused some suprise, not having been expected until tomorrow. Ninety-five miles of rough road had been travelled since the morning and the journey from Calgary made in less than two days which, we learn, is the best time on record on this trail.

FRIDAY — 27th May

The first part of the day was spent in attending to business, and in the afternoon I went out to 'do' the city and look up friends I had made on the occasion of my former visit two years ago. The town is increasing slowly but until railway communication is had, which probably will not be for some years yet, no advance of importance can be expected to take place. The country around is well adapted for farming, but the crops suffer occasionally from early frosts, and another drawback of some consideration is the disadvantage of simply being able to raise produce for a local market, as the distance from the railway prevents it being sent out of the district. The Company's fort here is much larger than required for the trade and, at present, a part of it is rented to the North West Mounted Police. Edmonton has a population of about 300.

SATURDAY — 28th May

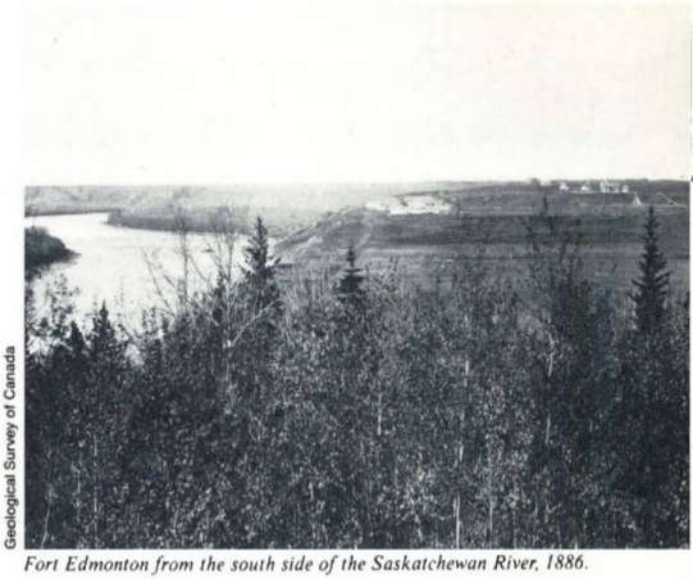
At seven o'clock this morning we said goodbye to our Edmonton friends, regretting much that time would not permit us to prolong our stay. Mr. Hardisty, we are sorry to find, is unable to accompany us on account of ill-health. I am much disappointed at this as I have very pleasant recollections of his companionship on a former occasion when we had 'chummed' it together in the same tent. It is probable that Dr. [W.M.] McKay, the Officer in charge of the Peace River District, will be asked to form one of the party in Mr. Hardisty's place. So far, I have been travelling over ground which I had already traversed but, now, new territory lies before me and the last traces of civilization are practically left behind when we drive out of Edmonton. Four teams are required for our conveyance as the road is such as will not permit of heavy loads being put in the wagons. Our men were sent ahead yesterday with orders to camp tonight at Stoney Creek, about 60 miles out. No houses are to be seen 25 miles from Edmonton but a stray Indian encampment is occasionally passed. The weather is still dry and fine, but a strong wind causes us some annoyance by raising the dust.

Forty miles from Edmonton the height of land is crossed where the water on the one side flows into the rivers which empty into Hudson's Bay and on the other, runs to the north and joins the rivers which eventually find an outlet in the Arctic Ocean through the great Mackenzie River.

By five o'clock in the afternoon Stoney Creek was reached, where we found our men encamped with tents pitched and dinner preparing. The run has been made quicker than anticipated, but it is not thought well to proceed further tonight as the horses are nearly done up. Dinner over, the Commissioner and I adjourn with our camp stools beneath a large tree and as he unburdens himself of thoughts affecting the business, which have been prompted by the visit to Calgary and Edmonton, I inscribe them in my note book where they will remain until some convenient opportunity occurs for writing them up.

Geological Survey of Canada

Travellers on the road between Calgary and Edmonton, 1889.



Geological Survey of Canada

Fort Edmonton from the south side of the Saskatchewan River, 1886.

SUNDAY — 29th May

There being no occasion for hurry now we did not start until seven o'clock. The wind had gone down and there was every sign of a sweltering hot day. The drive during the early morning was delightful and even during the heat of the day it was most enjoyable, as for many miles the road winds through the woods which afford ample protection from the sun. The trees, now chiefly pine, increase in size as we go north; but large tracts of valuable timber have been devastated by fire within the last few days. In many places the fire is smouldering and we passed not very far from where it was still sweeping everything before it. The road, as we were informed, is a rough one, but being favoured with dry weather it is in better condition than usual. It has been made by the Company at considerable expense and we have to exercise care in navigating our way among the stumps of the large trees which have been cut down in its construction. Up hills, down valleys, crossing creeks where the mud reaches to the axles, fording streams which threaten to sweep buckboard and contents away: in this way on we go until noon when all at once, after ascending a steep hill, we perceive below us, about a mile away, the Athabasca River gliding placidly along and the Company's new buildings on the bank of the river, with the Hudson's Bay's flag fluttering in the breeze.

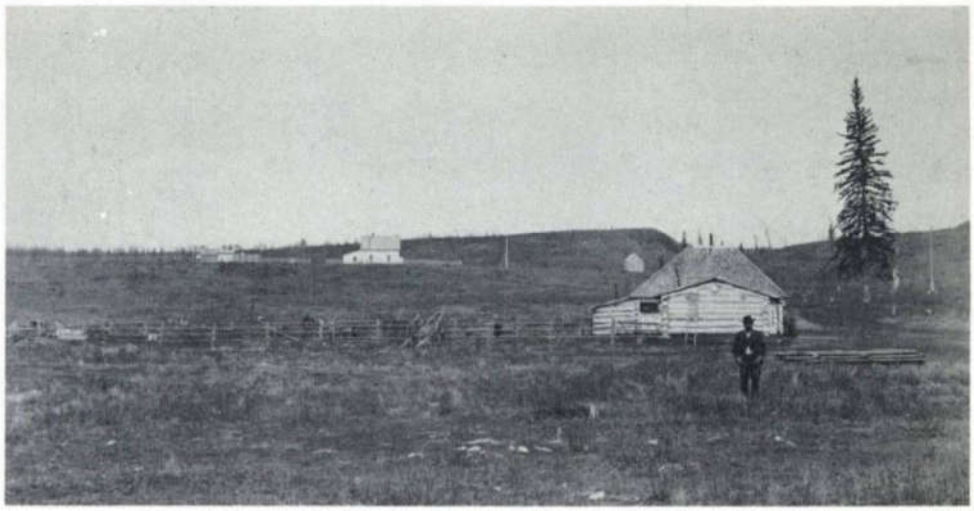
Athabasca Landing is comparatively a new point with the Hudson's Bay Company which, every year, will become of more importance in connection with the northern trade. Formerly, the supplies for the north were all sent via Carlton and Green Lake, the way by which we intend to return; but for the last year or two this new route has been adopted with the result of effecting a considerable reduction in the cost of transport. Supplies are sent by rail to Calgary, teamed from there to the Landing and dispatched by boats, either to their destination or to meet the steamer which plies on the Athabasca River as far up as Fort McMurray and connects with the Mackenzie River boat at Fort Smith. A large warehouse has been erected here this year to store the goods and a trading shop, with other necessary houses have also been built.

It was arranged that Dr. McKay should meet us here with a York boat and picked crew. On our arrival, however, there was no word of him but three hours after, a crew of nine men arrived by canoes from Lesser Slave Lake Post, having been sent by the Doctor to man a boat which was ready at this place. From the men we learned that the Doctor had been prevented from crossing Lesser Slave Lake by the ice which was still fast when they left, although expected to move at any moment. They had forced a passage by skirting along the shore, occasionally hauling their canoes over the ice until the open water was reached. The ice went out of the Athabasca River on the 26th of April, but it is always some weeks later before it breaks up in the lake. It is the same with Lake Winnipeg where the ice at this date is probably still fast.

Some time before our departure from Winnipeg two consignments of supplies were forwarded for our trip; the one to await us at Athabasca Landing, the other to go on to Fort Chipewyan. The first we now received for the journey through the Peace River country.

MONDAY — 30th May

By nine o'clock the baggage and supplies were placed on board the boat and half an hour later we followed and a start was made up the river. Mr. [W.L.] Wood, the gentleman in charge at the Landing, accompanies us at the request of the Commissioner and will remain until Dr. McKay is met. A word as to boat and crew and another as to our means of locomotion. Our craft is 35 feet long, 10 feet beam and without any deck, being what is generally known throughout the North West as a York boat. The crew is composed of nine half breed Crees, all strong, wiry young fellows, exceedingly good natured and always ready for work.



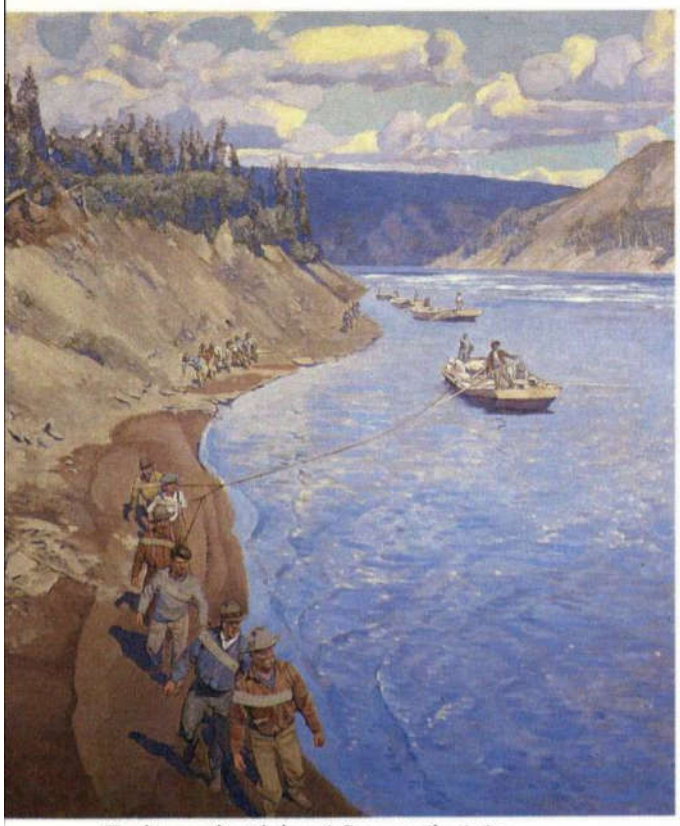
Athabasca Landing, 9 October 1891. From the collection of Chief Factor McDougall, officer in charge of the Athabasca District until his appointment as acting inspector for the Company in 1890.

As to the manner in which we ascend the river, rowing is out of the question as the current flows at the rate of fully six miles an hour and the tortuous course of the river will not admit of sailing. The means adopted is called 'tracking' which simply consists in being dragged with a rope from the shore, the crew working in relays of four, each set taking about three-quarters of an hour on the line. It is rough, arduous work, more suited for a canal horse than for human beings. The banks are thickly wooded to the water's edge and it is with considerable difficulty that the men force a path through the brush and over fallen trees. All day long they are soaking wet as every now and again they have to jump into the water up to their waists to push off the boat which, being kept as near the bank as possible to avoid the strong current, occasionally gets on shore. When the bank does not afford a foot path, they have to march along for hours up to their knees in mud and water. On reaching a rapid, the four men in the boat assist by pushing with poles. The rate of progress is necessarily slow, not averaging more than about two miles an hour, but faster time cannot be made unless with canoes which would not accommodate our baggage and supplies of provisions. This mode of travelling throughout the country, with a few exceptions, will soon be a relic of the past, as the steamers lately put on the Athabasca and Mackenzie Rivers have done away with it there, and the Company contemplate building a steamboat next winter at Athabasca Landing to ply on this river (the Upper Athabasca) and Lesser Slave River.

The day has been fine and not too warm. At nine o'clock we hitch up to the bank for the night, having made only twenty miles. The men go on shore and soon light a roaring fire around which they camp. As a start will be made before four o'clock in the morning I consider it prudent not to pitch my tent on shore but, instead, to arrange a place among the baggage in the boat for my bed during the night. An awning has been thoughtfully erected in the stern of the boat to protect us from the sun and it also serves the purpose of a tent during the night, but the accommodation is so limited that I prefer sleeping under the boat cover.

TUESDAY — 31st May

Before I opened my eyes this morning we were some miles from our last night's camp. During the day we perceived a small raft coming downstream with a solitary individual sitting upon it and using a paddle to help him along. We were just landing for dinner at the time and on seeing us, he approached cautiously and landed a few yards above our boat. So far as colour went, he appeared at the distance to be a native, but on closer acquaintance, his features and tattered clothing revealed a white man and a hard looking specimen of the race. Being the first person we had met since leaving the Landing we hoped he would be able to furnish some information of the Doctor, so I questioned him on the subject. He, however, had no news to give and stated that he had not seen a living being for the last ten days. Upon his primitive craft there were a few skins, a gun, a blanket and last, but not of the least importance, a small keg which we conjectured contained whiskey. He informed us that he had been trading and that his stock of goods was exhausted. But Mr. Wood knew the man and his business and from him we learned that he was one of a gang of whiskey pedlars who have been selling liquor to the Indians for furs and of whom the Mounted Police have been in quest for some time. Perceiving that his business was known, he invited us to 'have a smile' which, of course, was declined and fearing that we might cause him trouble, he hurriedly put off again and went drifting down the river on the outlook for some more likely



'Tracking on the Athabasca'. From an oil painting by W. J. Phillips, for the Hudson's Bay Company.

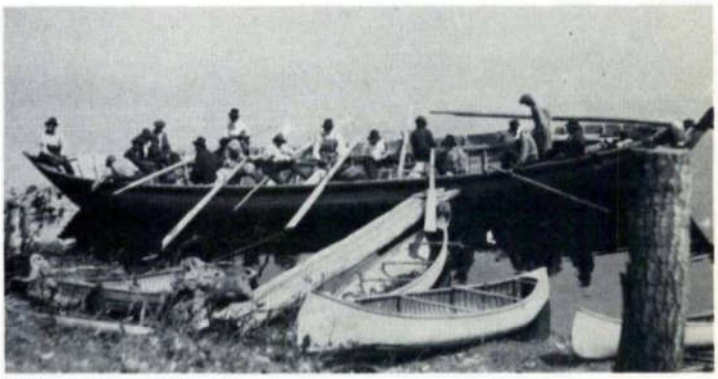
customer with whom to ply his illicit traffic. When as much as $5 and even $10 are paid for a bottle of whiskey at Edmonton and other outlying points in the Northwest Territories, the inducement for men to engage in the liquor business will be understood. No liquor is allowed, by law, to be sold in the Territories and only small quantities are permitted to be taken in the country for private use, by means of a special order granted by the Lieutenant Governor, generally issued to privileged individuals. Notwithstanding, however, the most stringent precautions, large quantities are smuggled into the country, principally by Americans.

The weather today has been colder with a strong head wind which has retarded our progress somewhat. There is no news of the Doctor yet and the steersman is of the opinion that he has passed down the river last night while we were camped. About nine o'clock we brought up for the night, having barely made twenty miles during the day owing to the numerous rapids and the strong head wind.

WEDNESDAY — 1st June

Between three and four o'clock this morning I was aroused by the shouting of the men who were making a start, and on taking a look behind I observed the cause of their excitement. Coming up round the bend of the River was a canoe with three persons in it and as they approached closer, we recognized the Doctor. As suspected by the Steersman, he had passed us in the dark on the night of the 31st ultimo and had gone to within a few miles of the Landing ere he learned

Dr W. M. MacKay, 1864, on his departure from Edinburgh for service with the Hudson's Bay Company. He was the officer in charge of the Peace River District at the time of Robertson's journey, and the first medical practitioner in the Northwest.



York boat on the Athabasca.

that we had already passed up. He at once left the York boat in which he had come down and followed us with a canoe, working night and day until he overtook us. Mr. Wood remained until breakfast and immediately after departed for the Landing with the canoe and the two men who had come with the Doctor.

At five o'clock in the afternoon the Forks of the Athabasca and Lesser Slave River were reached. We now left the Athabasca and entered the Lesser Slave River. The sixty miles of the river up which we have come is from three to four hundred yards in width and this distance may easily be navigated by a light draught steamer, as may also the portion below the Landing consisting of about 165 miles. The banks and surrounding country are heavily wooded with fine timber, which would be of considerable value if it were closer to a market. Four miles above the mouth of the Lesser Slave River we brought up, our record for the day being 24 miles. The weather has been cold with showers of rain and a strong head wind again impeded our progress. Today, for the first time, we had to make use of our water-proof garments.

THURSDAY — 2nd June

A clear dry day with a bright warm sun was truly welcome after a night of rain. The wet had searched through the boat-cover which I had spread over my bedding and had soaked into my blankets.

J. McDougall, HBC Collection

Lesser Slave Lake post, 26 September 1891.

HBC Collection

Office at the Lesser Slave Lake post, 1906.

The Lesser Slave River is not so wide as the Athabasca, but its features otherwise are much the same. We do not proceed very far before the men have to take to the oars owing to the edge of the banks being densely overhung with large willows which make tracking impossible. By taking a turn at the large heavy sweeps I soon discover that rowing a York boat is no simple amusement, and five minutes is sufficient to convince me of that. It is astonishing the endurance and staying power these fellows possess. From four in the early morning till nine in the evening they remain at the oars with the exception of three hour stoppages for meals and a few short spells of five minutes each. Never have I seen men work so cheerfully and with such willingness. Laughing and joking among themselves in their own language, they are always in the best of spirits, and I have no doubt the ample allowance of flour and bacon, with tea and sugar, which they receive while on the trip may have something to do with their contentment and exuberance of spirits. Taking a slow, deliberate, yet powerful stroke, they do their work like machines; but notwithstanding their exertions, our progress at times is discouraging as in places, the current is so strong that we do not make a mile an hour. However, the worst of the rapids is passed today and as the lake is approached, the river does not flow so swiftly. Twenty-four more miles was the result of the day's work when we put on shore to camp.

FRIDAY — 3rd June

Last night the Doctor and I slept on shore, spreading our bedding at the foot of a large pine tree. The night promising to be dry we did not pitch a tent and, at any rate, we hardly considered it worth our while for the short time we would have to rest. A few feet away were our men cooking their supper around a blazing fire of pine logs. With a moon nearly full and a clear starlit sky, the scene presented was weird and grand, recalling vividly to my mind the description of scenes so graphically portrayed in the sensational dime novels of my time. As I lay and watched the men devouring the fat bacon, with half-cooked sodden bread, more prosaic thoughts stole into my breast and I felt truly envious of the cast-iron digestive organs with which nature had endowed them. Supper finished, they rolled themselves up in their blankets and dropped off into a sleep, the depth of which I have no doubt would be envied by a Rothschild or a Vanderbilt.

By half past three this morning we were stirring and four o'clock saw us again on the river. There was a quarter of an inch of ice on some water in a basin in the boat, but I cannot say that I felt the cold during the night in my spacious bedroom.

Since leaving Edmonton we have seen little or no game and today for the first time, some ducks came within range and a couple fell to our guns. A beaver was observed crossing the stream about 200 yards above the boat but he dived and disappeared before we could get a shot.

A strong head wind has again interfered with our progress and it was nine o'clock in the evening before

J. McDougall, HBC Collection

The dwelling house at Lesser Slave Lake, 26 September 1891.

we finished the remaining 17 miles of river and entered Lesser Slave Lake. There are some half-breed huts and Indian tepees on the banks of the lake close to the head of the river and as we determined to travel all night, it was thought well to go on shore and procure two more boatmen to relieve the crew, some of whom seemed to be getting exhausted. The wind has fallen considerably but it is still adverse and nothing remains but to continue rowing. Five oars are kept going continually, there being now ten men available and while the one set is rowing, the others are having forty winks.

SATURDAY — 4th June

I went to sleep last night making a shake-down as best I could among the baggage and crew. On awaking this morning I found we were snugly berthed in a small river on a point five miles from Lesser Slave River, this being all the distance we had come. The men had continued to row against a head wind which had at last compelled them to put in for shelter at five o'clock. About nine o'clock, however, the wind fell and was succeeded by a calm. Immediately getting under way we proceeded all day with the oars, and by sun-down 35 miles more had been made.

Lesser Slave Lake may fairly be entitled to be described as a pretty sheet of water, and the wooded hills which environ its eastern shores add materially to its beauty. The lake is subject to violent storms which arise without any warning and there being few places where shelter can be had, those who have to cross are anxious to make the passage as quickly as possible. The lake is 70 miles in length and 9 miles in breadth at the widest part, its average width being about 7 miles.

SUNDAY — 5th June

By ten o'clock this morning we finished the remaining 20 miles to Lesser Slave Lake Post, thus arriving one day ahead of the time arranged by our programme. The weather was beautiful and the fort and its surroundings looked at their best; but, still, I cannot call the place pretty, although nature smiled its sweetest today to win for it the compliment. Being now the head post of the Peace River District the number of buildings are greater than what are to be found around an ordinary post. Officers' and clerks' quarters, servants' houses, trading shop, stores, work shops, etc., all comprise what is known as the fort. The term 'fort', however, is more applicable to posts surrounded by a stockade and Lesser Slave Lake Post has none. It is situated on the north side of a channel which connects Lesser Slave Lake with Buffalo Lake. Beside the Company's people, the priests at the Roman Catholic Mission are the only other white residents. The population residing in the vicinity are mostly Cree Indians and half-breeds, their chief means of subsistence being fish with which the lake abounds. We have taken up our quarters in the officer's house and are to be the guests of the Doctor during our stay here.

MONDAY — 6th June

Most of the time today was spent around the fort attending to business. It is decided that the Doctor shall proceed with us through the North. Finding that the time allowed for the journey to the Crossing of the Peace River is considered too short owing to the state of the roads, arrangements are made to leave tomorrow instead of the 8th, the day appointed. Our cook and servant have been sent ahead today with the supplies and as they are to travel with ox carts, we expect to overtake them tomorrow night. Mr. Anderson, the officer in charge of Dunvegan, has arrived and will bear us company to that post.

During our short visit here we have had a taste of country fare and to tell the truth, we will not be sorry to get back to our own mess table again. For civility's sake we are the guests of the Doctor and it is our opinion he wishes us thoroughly to understand how the Company's people are situated in the interior. I am fond of fish and the fish obtained here are excellent, but a course of fish at every meal without any other option is too much of a good thing. At the fort they have been living for months upon fish, with a little flour and bacon occasionally added as a luxury. At most of the posts inland dependence for a livelihood is placed on provisions secured in the country, such as fish, moose, deer, rabbits, ducks, geese, etc., and the failure of such supplies often causes a state of affairs approaching starvation. Only a limited quantity of flour and bacon is imported and sometimes through an accident to the transport, this supply fails to reach its destination. A few years ago many of the more remote posts received no allowance of flour, on account of the difficulty of transport, and the people subsisted entirely on fish and what supplies they could procure in the country. Tea, the universal beverage of the North is, generally, liberally supplied, but sugar happens occasionally to be scarce. Last winter has been a severe

one for the inhabitants throughout the interior as nearly all sources of subsistence have failed, and there are rumours that even cannibalism has been resorted to by some Indians. Considering the privations the officials of the Company have to undergo we ought not to complain at having to partake of plain fare for a few days. We have a suspicion that the housekeeper has 'cached' what luxuries were on hand; an act, for which in all justice, she can hardly be blamed. When on the subject, a word about our mess and the arrangements connected with it may not be out of place. A portable sheet-iron cooking stove, with the necessary accompaniments of pots, kettles, etc., forms part of our outfit. When on the boat the stove is fitted up in the bow where the cooking is done. The cook himself we have pronounced to be an artist in the culinary profession of no mean ability. His productions give much satisfaction, especially considering that the materials at his disposal chiefly consist of canned goods. The assortment of preserved provisions, however, is large and varied and we are also fortunate to have a supply of butter and eggs. Bread is baked every day and puddings, pastry, cakes, etc., come to the table in their proper place. With the exception of fresh meat, we fare nearly as well as if we were in the city. Our waiter, I am sorry to say, does not perform his duties to the same satisfaction as the cook. He is a Cockney who believes he will 'strike it rich' some day, although he is in a menial position at present; but I am very much afraid the riches will have to strike him as he does not seem to possess sufficient energy ever to strike the 'pile' should the opportunity be afforded him.

SUNDAY — 12th June

For the first time since last Monday I have found time to jot down a few notes again. I sincerely trust that we will not have to repeat the experiences of the past week any more on our travels. The roads we have traversed since leaving Lesser Slave Lake are unequalled throughout the Northwest. But I had better return to Tuesday the 7th, the day of our departure. At seven o'clock in the morning we left the fort and took boat across Buffalo Lake, a distance of four miles, to the commencement of the road to the Crossing of the Peace River, or what is generally called the Forks. The Commissioner's buckboard, a wagon and three saddled horses, were awaiting us, besides several spare horses for the journey. I did not feel equal to riding the 75 miles which intervened to the Crossing as it is nearly two years since I had been in the saddle, but no other option was left me other than sitting in the box of a wagon without springs, which, in itself was not a pleasant prospect considering the reported state of the road. Deciding to ride for some distance at any rate, I mounted a horse which had been placed at my disposal; the Doctor drove the Commissioner's team and the Commissioner's son secured a place on the spring seat of the wagon along with the driver. By nightfall we came up with our men, having done 27 miles of the roughest travelling I have ever experienced.

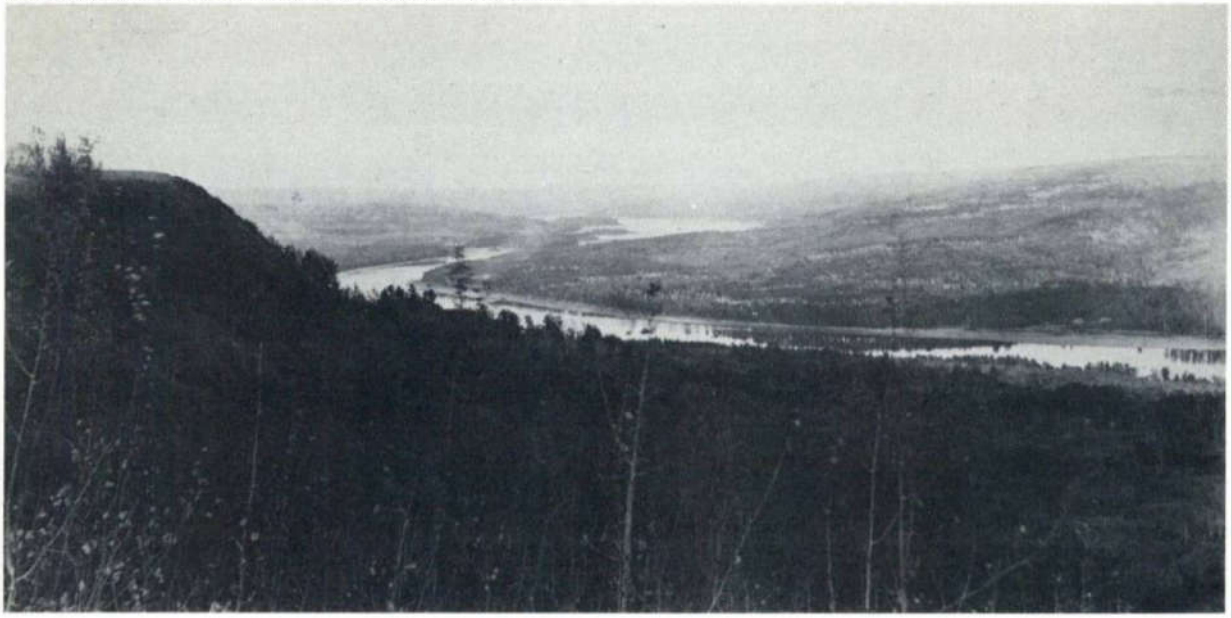
The road is simply a cart track cut through the woods for the conveyance of the supplies to the posts on the Peace River. Every summer, before the season's transport begins, it has to be repaired to make it passable and on the occasion of our journey, the necessary repairs had not yet been executed and many of the bridges swept away by the spring freshets not replaced. Fording streams with great difficulty, threading our way amid fallen trees and stumps, crossing muskegs where the horses sink to the saddle girths, compelling us to get down to help to extricate the animals and vehicles; these and similar difficulties went to make up our first day's experiences, to be repeated perhaps in a somewhat minor degree on the second. Being on horseback I had rather the best of it on this part of the road, but I felt sore and stiff after my first day's ride.

On Wednesday morning we laid in sufficient provisions out of the general supply to last four days and started off ahead of our men, giving them instructions to await our return from Dunvegan at the Crossing of the Peace River. The road being a shade better than that of the previous day, 36 miles were made and by noon on Thursday, the remaining 17 miles were accomplished and the Crossing reached. At this point, the Heart and Smoky rivers flow into the Peace River and form the Forks. The view to be obtained here is said by travellers to be one of the finest in North America. At the confluence of the rivers, the banks which are rich in flowers and varied with groves of trees, slope upwards several hundred feet; and looking westwards from an advantageous spot on the heights, the scene in all its beauty lay before us. The broad Peace River, shimmering in the sun, stretched away for miles in the distance, and immediately beneath us, where the Rivers meet in the valley, its bosom was decked with a cluster of lovely wooded islets. The day was clear and bright and although jaded and sore after the experiences of the last few days, we enjoyed the view to the full and felt amply rewarded for any hardships we had undergone. Having a photographic apparatus along with us, we took advantage of the opportunity to expose a couple of plates and trust the result will be a success.

The country between Lesser Slave Lake and the Crossing is mostly wooded, chiefly with poplar and large flower-bearing willows; but for some distance along the course of the Heart River we passed through a stretch of very fine prairie land on which the pea vine and wild vetches grow luxuriantly.

The Company's post at the Crossing is mainly established as a forwarding depot for the supplies going to the posts on the Peace River.

'View of the Peace River from top of the hills opposite Smoky River'.



J. McDougall, HBC Collection

On our arrival at the Crossing, we met Bishop [Richard] Young, the Episcopalian Bishop of Athabasca and the Rev. Mr. Holmes, who were on their way to Lesser Slave Lake from Vermilion, the headquarters of the diocese. Just prior to our appearance on the scene, this august dignitary of the church was sporting around in a rough deerskin coat, but on hearing of our approach, he donned his more clerical garb. The Commissioner invited both these gentlemen to join us at dinner and as our spare dishes, knives, etc, were all left behind with the baggage, they were requested to be good enough to bring along their own table utensils. This would seem rather an undignified invitation to give a live bishop, but ceremony has to be dispensed with in the wilds and no doubt, when His Reverence is on some of his missionary tours, he would be glad to have as substantial a meal as he received at our hands.

After a stay of six hours we crossed the river in canoes and found the wagons and horses ready for the journey to Dunvegan. The same evening we camped 8 miles out and the following night (Friday) about half past nine o'clock, reached Dunvegan, having completed the remaining 60 miles; the distance being 68 miles from the Crossing. During the latter part of the journey, the horses became fagged and when about 20 miles from the fort, a drenching rain began to fall which made the roads heavy and considerably added to our difficulties. I drove in the wagon and rode on horseback alternately, decidedly preferring the latter mode of travelling. On the last stretch, when about a couple of miles from the fort, my horse gave up and as I was riding some distance behind the others, I was compelled to leave him and perform the rest of the way on foot amid heavy rain, arriving at the post in a sorry plight. In a few more days I would have got quite inured to riding, but the jolting in the wagon was unbearable and some care was required to prevent being thrown out of the box when passing over the rough parts.

A comfortable night's rest at Dunvegan was much appreciated as, what with the dreadful roads and the short time we had to sleep while on the trip, all felt pretty well exhausted. Rain continued to fall all night and part of the next morning, but after breakfast it cleared up and the rest of the day was fine. Since leaving Lesser Slave Lake fortune had favoured us with respect to weather and had this not been the case, our troubles would have been much increased.

Fort Dunvegan is beautifully situated on the north bank of the Peace River, standing in a hollow amid steep hills which rise to the height of 700 or 800 feet almost immediately from its enclosures. Vegetation was farther advanced here than it would have been in Manitoba at the same date. Garden stuffs were coming on rapidly; and we secured a quantity of rhubarb of very large growth for our mess table.

St. John's and Hudson's Hope are two posts further up the river, the latter post being in the mountains; but time would not admit of our visiting them and in going to Dunvegan, we have deviated somewhat as we are only visiting posts lying immediately along the route and we have, therefore, to retrace our steps to the Crossing. Dunvegan, until lately, was the head post of the Peace River District.. It is still a post of some importance to the Company and the scenery in the vicinity is, alone, well worth a visit. ♦

Part II: Commissioner Wrigley continues north to Fort Vermilion, Little Red River, Fort Chipewyan, Fort Providence, Fort Simpson and Fort Good Hope. He then travels by steamer down the Mackenzie to the Peel River post.

Charles Elton and the Hudson's Bay Company

By Anne Morton

IN DECEMBER 1924 a young Oxford zoologist named Charles Elton sent a letter to Sir Robert Kindersley, Governor of the Hudson's Bay Company, enclosing a copy of his article 'The Periodic Fluctuations in the Numbers of Animals: Their Cause and Effects' and a sample of a questionnaire which he wished to have circulated among the post managers. The Company responded with alacrity and the questionnaires were sent out by March of the following year. So began a twenty-five-year association between the Company and one of the founding fathers of ecology.

Charles Elton was born in Liverpool in 1900, the son of Oliver Elton, the scholar of English literature. Educated at Liverpool College and New College, Oxford, Elton took a first-class honours degree in zoology in 1922. The previous year he had been a member of the Oxford University Arctic Expedition to the Spitsbergen archipelago, and it was there that he embarked upon the research that was to be of such importance to a new science.

This new science is ecology, usually defined as the study of the behaviour of living organisms and their relationships to each other and to their environment. Most people are aware that the natural world of which we are a part is bound together by a series of complex and fragile links which we tamper with at our peril. This awareness is so much a part of the modern vision of reality that we tend to forget that people did not always think this way and have, in fact, begun to think this way only recently. Ecology is a science whose roots go back only to the last century and several of its pioneers, like Elton himself, are still living.

The study of the relationships of animals to each other and to their environment has been at the heart of Elton's work. On the Oxford expedition of 1921 and subsequent expeditions to Spitsbergen in the 1920s Elton made his pioneering discoveries into the structure of animal communities. Conditions on Spitsbergen were not easy (the only source of heat was driftwood from Siberia) but it is an ideal spot for ecological observations because of the relative simplicity of species and communities. Starting with his observations in the field of what (or whom) the animals ate, Elton arrived at such fundamental ecological concepts as the food chain and the Eltonian pyramid. An Eltonian pyramid describes the distribution and abundance of animals within a community. At the top may be a wide-ranging creature such as an owl, who eats several moles, who have eaten earthworms. An Eltonian pyramid can even be used to describe the history of the human race. We started at the top, as a small population of nomadic and carnivorous hunters, and have gradually moved down towards the base of the pyramid as our numbers have grown, our habitation has become settled and our diet increasingly herbivorous.

On his way home from the Spitsbergen expedition of 1923 Elton spent some of his last shillings in a Tromsø shop on a book about Norwegian animals, *Norges Pattedyr* by Robert Collett. He was fascinated by its account of the regular fluctuations in the lemming populations and the effects of these on the animal communities of which the lemmings were a part. In that same year his former tutor, Julian Huxley, lent him a copy of C. Gordon Hewitt's *The Conservation Of The Wild Life Of Canada* which had just been published in 1921. In the ninth chapter of this book, 'The Periodic Fluctuations Of Our Fur-Bearing Animals', Hewitt suggested that the changes in the populations of fur-bearing animals were related to changes in the populations of rodents upon which they fed. Hewitt recognized that the study of periodic fluctuations promised years of work and could be of great benefit to wildlife management and the commercial fur harvest. He had died of influenza the year before his book was published, and his work had to be carried on by others.

Elton's attention was thus turned to the study of population dynamics or the forces which influence the periodic fluctuations in animal populations. These fluctuations are, as Elton called them, 'an integral property of the living cosmos . . . not merely symptoms of an accidental interference by man with a naturally

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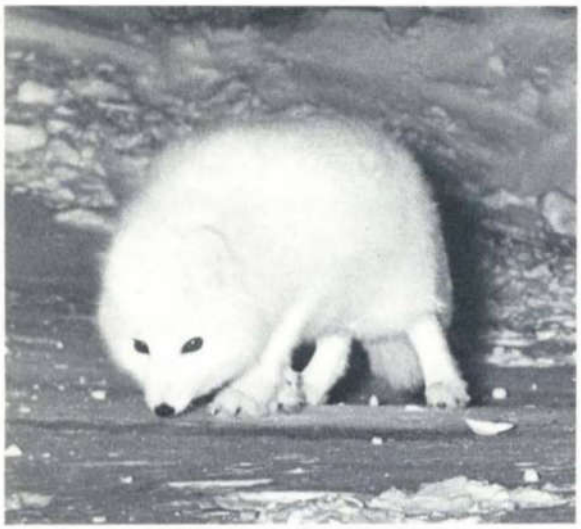


Gabriel Gély, H B C Collection

Arctic fox (white fox) roaming at night, Banks Island.

Charles Elton, one of the founding fathers of ecology, worked closely with the Hudson's Bay Company for twenty-five years. He sought the causes of the dramatic fluctuations in the white fox and lemming populations of the North.

balanced state of nature.' Unlike the population of our own species, which can to a large extent control its environment, animal populations appear to wax and wane in response to environmental factors. The regularity of this phenomenon is most remarkable in northern fur-bearing animals. It was to be Elton's task to prove that this phenomenon did indeed occur and to discover why it occurred.

Anyone interested in population changes will need some sort of reliable guide to population size, continuous over a long period. Hewitt had found such a guide in the fur returns of the Hudson's Bay Company from 1821 to 1914. These had been made available to him by Norman Bacon, Fur Trade Commissioner from 1913 to 1918. It was perhaps fortunate for science that Bacon had come to the Commissionership from the London office and so had none of the fur trader's traditional secrecy about fur returns. As Hewitt realized, the scientific value of the Company's returns lay not just in their extent over time but also in the fact that they came from all over Canada, and particularly from the North, where natural conditions had been little altered. They also represented the total or almost total fur catch.

There must have been great excitement for Elton in coming upon a new and important subject for research, closely related to the work he was already doing on the structure of animal communities, and provided with an excellent source of data. As an added advantage, the Company, inspired by the occasion of its 250th anniversary, had begun to assemble its archives in London. Where earlier scientists connected with the Company, like Christopher Middleton, had faced a dangerous voyage through arctic waters, Elton was to need only his ticket to Paddington or his Morris car — and his considerable intelligence.

And so Elton wrote to the Governor and within a few months his questionnaire was sent out. The Company did even more. As Elton matter-of-factly put it: 'The Hudson's Bay Company, to whom I had written for fuller information than Hewitt's book contained, engaged me as a biological consultant, a position I kept for five years, working at Oxford.' Elton's friend, George Binney, the organizer of the Spitsbergen Expeditions, and Governor Sale's personal assistant from 1925 to 1931, suggested to Sale in June 1926 that Elton be engaged as the Company's 'Fur Consultant'. Elton was not a Company employee; the arrangement was devised to help both his research at Oxford and the Company's fur business.

Photograph by A.N.T. Rankin, courtesy of Charles Elton

Charles Elton cooking at base camp, Oxford University Arctic Expedition, 1924.

Fred Bruemmer

Fred Bruemmer

The Greenland collared lemming (varying lemming) in summer and winter coats. Several geographical subspecies of the collared lemming are found in Northern Canada.

The Company hoped to benefit financially from Elton's researches. As a branch of the commodity business, the fur trade is caught between the vagaries of supply and demand, and the ensuing ups and downs are notorious. Elton's research offered the possibility of predicting the fur cycles and thus the supply of fur-bearing animals available from one year to the next. This knowledge would help to determine the price which should be paid for furs and the quantity of stock which should be sent to the posts. The fur trade was no longer the Company's mainstay, but there was still money to be made in furs, and the Company was determined to make it. Part of Elton's work with the Company, for example, was concerned with the fox populations of Labrador and Northern Quebec, and his research began in the heyday of the fashion for silver and arctic fox. (This fashion was to achieve its glamorous height in 1930 when Gertrude Lawrence wore arctic fox over her Molyneux gown in the first act of *Private Lives*.)

Elton himself remembers that after one of the Company's auctions, when his accurate prediction of a muskrat glut had not been heeded, Sale told him 'We have lost £20,000 today!'

Yet there were motives other than strictly financial ones behind the Company's sponsorship of Elton's work. Part of the explanation lies in the character of Charles Sale, the Deputy Governor who answered Elton's first letter and who became the Company's Managing Director and 29th Governor in June 1925. Born in 1868, Sale was nearing 60 when he became Governor. With his snow-white hair and impeccably conventional dress, he looked nothing of the visionary. Elton, however, remembers him as 'a great man', able to see far beyond the twelve-month horizon which limits the vision of the ordinary businessman. Sale had been born into the world of big business, and it was for the experience he had gained in the family firm of Sale & Co., a shipping company with extensive interests in the Far East, that Governor Kindersley had invited him to join the Board in 1915, in order to run the vast shipping enterprise which the Company had undertaken as agents of the French Government. The war over, Sale turned his energy and imagination to other aspects of the Company's affairs. He continued to display these qualities during his Governorship.

One attractive aspect of Sale's personality was his willingness to take chances on young men such as Elton. Two others whose careers he fostered were Philip Chester (1896-1976) whom Sale dispatched to Canada as Chief Accountant in 1925 (from which position Chester rose to be Managing Director), and George Binney (1900-1972). Binney was involved with the Development Department, one of Sale's characteristic innovations. Its purpose was to carry out research into ways of making the traditional culture of the native peoples of Canada and Labrador more profitable and beneficial to them. The Department's new ideas were not always well received by the traditionalists of the fur trade. One can sympathize with the reactions of post managers on receiving shipments of glass eyes, intended for the use of local women in making toy rabbits, but the idea was a good one, as we now know.

Elton was in effect a consultant attached to the Development Department and his research belongs in the same moral context. For it too was a means of applying modern knowledge to the old ways of life and thereby carrying out the Company's historic responsibilities towards the native peoples. For the more that was understood about the animals with whom their livelihood and culture was bound up the better. Financial motives were not the sole reason for Sale's support of Elton's work.

The correspondence between Sale and Elton survives in the Company's archives and the letters which passed between the young scientist and the elderly

tycoon, who shared a willingness to follow new paths and a desire for knowledge, make delightful reading. As he sailed to Canada in the summer of 1929, for example, the Governor took the trouble to pass on what he thought might prove useful information on epidemic diseases among rabbits gleaned from Robert Campbell's journals. Yet the relationship between the two was to fall victim to events in the world outside.

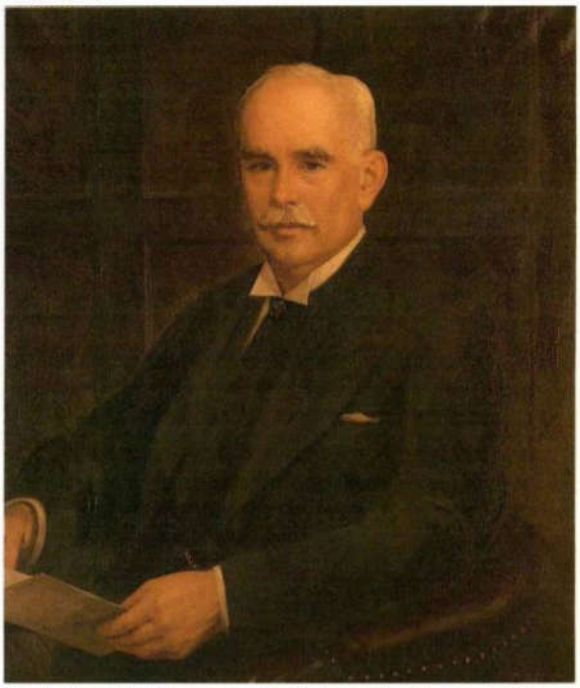
During Sale's tenure as Governor the Company was beset by serious financial difficulties. It now seems that these were the result of the international financial collapse and the drought and depression in Western Canada and not the fault of Sale and his innovative policies. The Company's shareholders, however, may perhaps be excused for not considering matters thus calmly. Many of them had acquired their shares in the same confidence of steady returns with which they would have opened a savings account and, bitterly disappointed, were now out for blood. Sale was the obvious scapegoat. After a period of intense agitation, led by the lawyer Charles Nordon (who seems to have been motivated by a genuine concern for the well-being of his fellow shareholders, although the Board, needless to say, did not view him in this light), Sale announced his resignation at an Extraordinary General Court held in January 1931. Even then the shareholders were not appeased. So violent was their indignation that they shouted down the Deputy Governor, Sir Frederick Richmond, when he attempted to pay tribute to Sale.

In the circumstances, Sale's phrase in his sad little letter to Elton which closes their official correspondence, 'decisions as to the future will not rest with me,' is a masterpiece of courteous restraint.

The new Governor, Patrick Ashley Cooper, was brought in to perform the same sort of rescue job on the Company's faltering fortunes as he was attempting to do for his country as a member of the National Economy Committee, and he set to work with a will. The resulting 'wave of economy', as Elton termed it, 'engulfed . . . some new things . . . meant to endure.' One of the new things engulfed was Elton's position as zoologist.

At that time Elton was trying to raise money to set up the research institute at Oxford which was to be known as the Bureau of Animal Population. The Company, however, provided grants for the Bureau, as did other supporters, and continued to allow access to its records, and the post managers sent in replies to the annual questionnaires until late in the war. Presumably the Company was still motivated by the hope that Elton's researches would prove of economic benefit as well as by a sense of moral obligation which required it to carry out promises made by the former Governor. The fact that the Fur Trade Commissioner, Ralph Parsons, was sympathetic to Elton's work must also have helped Elton's cause.

H B C Archives



Charles Sale, 29th Governor of the Hudson's Bay Company, 1925-1931. From a portrait in oils by S. Morse-Brown.

Despite the upheaval of 1931, then, Elton's work with the Company can be considered as a whole. It was work that involved him both with the Company's past, as preserved in its archives, and with its present, the men of the fur trade who answered his questionnaires and helped him in other ways.

The first home of the Company's archives was in a basement beneath the pavement of Bishopsgate in the City of London and it was here, as busy feet passed to and fro overhead, that Elton and his assistant Mary Nicholson began their work. The Company's archivist, Richard Leveson-Gower, was still classifying the documents, which explains why Elton's citations lack the classification numbers so familiar to today's researchers. The archives were taking physical shape, however, — 'in sections, companies and brigades they line in red filing cases the walls of a large basement library' — and Leveson-Gower proved a most helpful guide among 'the tangle of archives'.

As intently and patiently as he observed wildlife in the field, Elton searched through the records for data on animal populations. What was wanted first of all was numbers, the actual harvest of skins at the Company's posts, and at those of the Moravian Missions and Revillon Frères, who also granted Elton access to their fur returns. Yet the numbers were only the beginning, for they, as Elton pointed out, were 'only signs of something happening to the fur trade'. The numbers did not in themselves prove that animal populations fluctuated or explain why they fluctuated. Rather the

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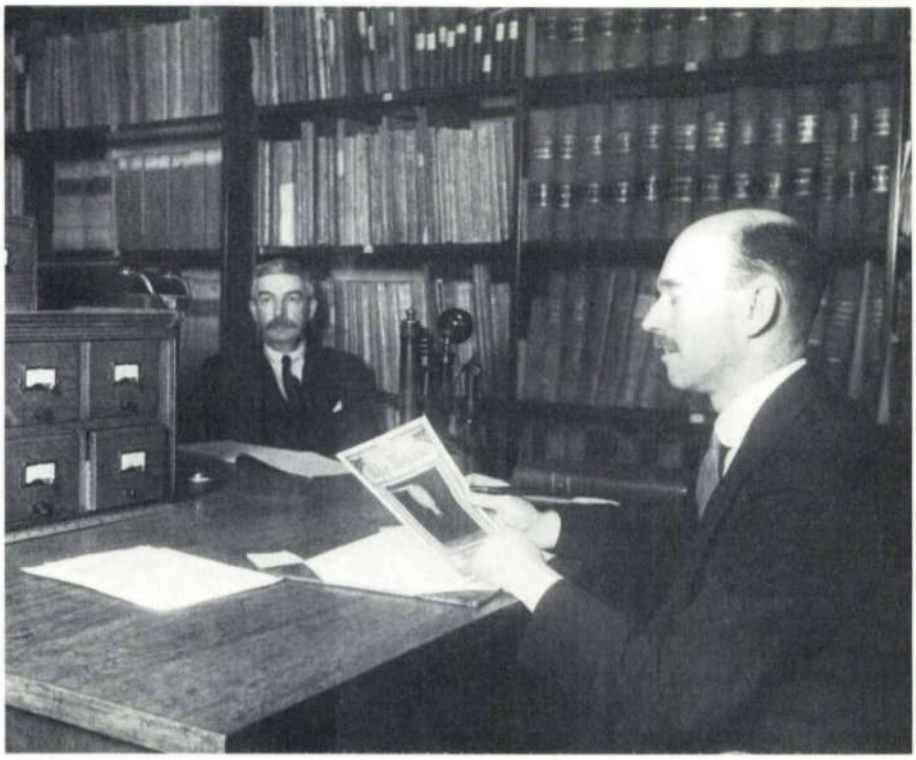


H B C Archivist R.H.G. Leveson-Gower, on the right, and historian Arthur S. Morton in the archives room at Hudson's Bay House, London, c. 1933. Space in the archives was limited and researcher and archivist had to work at close quarters.

numbers suggested the existence of a ten-year population cycle in central and northern Canada involving such species as the snowshoe hare, lynx, coloured fox, marten, fisher and muskrat, and of a three- to four-year cycle in Labrador, and of a similar short cycle farther north involving the arctic fox, snowy owl, voles and lemmings. Elton then had to rule out the possibility that other factors, such as forest fires, migration, or disease (among animals or hunters) might account for the changes in the size of the harvest. Elton also had to determine how large a percentage of the actual population was represented by the fur harvest. Too low a percentage would be statistically unreliable, and too high a percentage could mean that the fur trade itself was affecting the population.

So Elton had, as he put it, 'to graft ecology onto history', by delving into the journals, reports and letters of the old fur traders and missionaries. Through his painstaking reading, coupled with his sympathetic and imaginative interpretation of the documents, Elton came to an understanding of the living past in Northern Canada. Although the creators of the records were not trained scientific observers, they were vitally interested in wildlife, and Elton's work has made them posthumous contributors to ecological knowledge. Perhaps this would not have been much comfort to men such as the writer of the following doleful entry in the Nachvack journal for 13 October 1874:

> Sutherland digging up the turnips in the garden . . . We did not get more than one barrel, the same time I expected three to four. Nearly half was eaten by mice, which are unusually plentiful this year.

He might have had short rations that winter but, as we shall see, next year's trade in foxes should have compensated.

Elton's approach to the fur traders of his own day showed the same appreciation for what they could contribute. He doubtless would have preferred trained observers (he admired the Russian policy of placing 'resident biologists' in the field) but he cheerfully accepted what the Company had to offer with a pioneer's enjoyment in making do. The questionnaire itself was designed for the shrewd lay observer. For example, the respondents were to say whether the population of each species appeared to be more or less abundant than in the previous year, because 'people do not usually remember anything accurately for more than about one year'. Sale altered the original questionnaires after he learned from one of the District Managers that lemmings and voles were 'not recognized independently but simply classed as Wild Mice'. This is sensible enough, even if not scientifically pure; the hungry fox does not make nice distinctions either.

For the most part, the post managers were pleased to contribute to Elton's research. Bob Cruickshank, for example, manager of the Belcher Islands post, now

remembered for his assistance to the biologist Arthur Twomey, wrote to his District Manager about another of Elton's interests, the caribou population:

> It is a pleasurable task indeed to make a commentary on the various points raised by Mr. Elton. We are greatly interested and if our humble efforts in some small way help to reconstruct the past so that when we ultimately do something to re-introduce caribou our method of introduction will be based wisely and along sound lines.

Some of the men were encouraged to visit the Bureau of Animal Population while on furlough. One of them, J.E. Sidgwick, wrote to R.H.G. Bonnycastle: 'The only trouble was that the 3 hours I spent with them [Elton and his colleague Dennis Chitty] wasn't long enough but I may go up again if they want to see me.' Elton was equally pleased with Sidgwick's visit and wrote to tell Ralph Parsons: 'We had a very interesting talk. . . . He was able to tell me some useful things.'

The Company men helped in other ways. On one occasion a supply of live lemmings was sent to Oxford by Post Manager A. Dudley Copland to be observed. Elton tells the story of their journey:

> They were originally trapped at the Hudson's Bay Company post at Lake Harbour, sent to Port Burwell, where apparently local lemmings were put in to make up losses on the way, transferred to the care of the Hudson's Bay Company doctor, in whose bedroom slippers they partly lived on board ship, reached England in a glass-fronted cage, and were discovered in the Oxford Parcels Office being worshipped by two thunderstruck porters.

The adoration of the porters is explained by the fact that lemmings are engaging little creatures, rather like pocket guinea-pigs.

Monty Demment, the manager at Cape Dorset, even tried to experiment with marking animals but the experiment failed when he could find only one local hunter willing to take on the novel chore of tattooing the ears of foxes.

In the midst of this co-operative atmosphere, one fur trader clung to the legendary secrecy over the fur returns. Charles French, Fur Trade Commissioner from 1926 to 1930, had to be ordered by Sale to show Elton the returns of the Mackenzie River District. Elton remembers him as 'a tough egg', but he seems to have been the exception that proved the rule.

Elton was always eager to promote ecological investigation. He showered Ralph Parsons with off-prints and suggestions for the Department's 'Zoological Library', provided plenty of copies of the published zoological reports so that the post managers might be

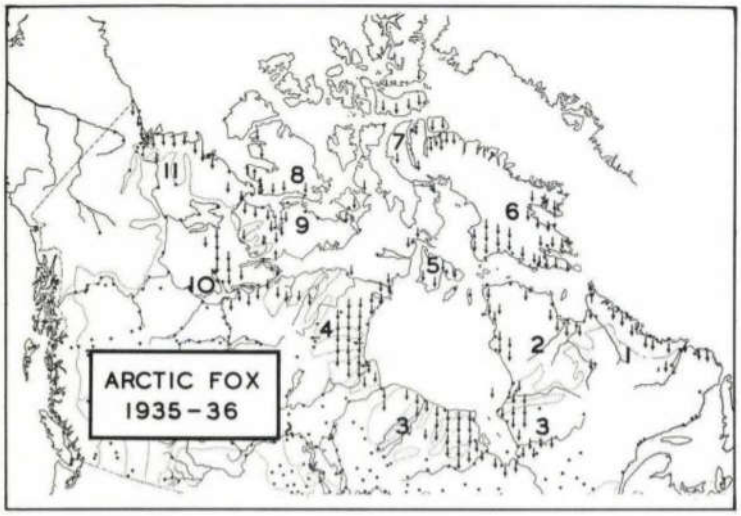
Don Blair, H B C Collection

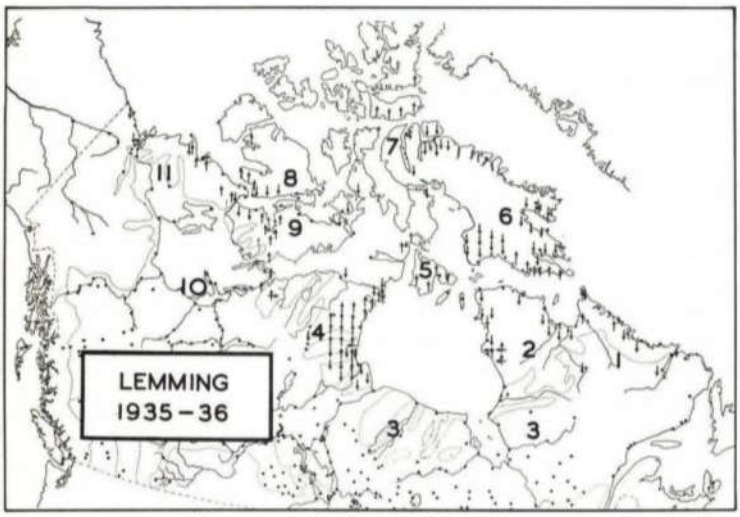
Inuit trading white fox skins with clerk R. Peterson at the H B C store, Cambridge Bay, 1954.

able to read them, and even brought lantern slides with him on his visits to Canada to illustrate talks on his work for the Company's men. His helpfulness may in part have caused the end of his connection with the Company, for it was at his suggestion that the Fur Trade Department hired its own biologist, Dr Leonard Butler from the University of Toronto. Butler's work was largely concerned with the Company's fur preserves and the experimental fur farm at Bird's Hill, Manitoba. He devised, however, a method of predicting fur cycles by averaging out past data, and the Department used his 'fur forecasts' for planning stocks at the posts. Butler expressed the view that Elton's main concern was to find out why the fur cycles happened, which could take years, while his method of

H B C Collection

O.M. ('Monty') Demment, H B C manager at Cape Dorset who experimented with marking animals for Elton's surveys.





Maps compiled by Charles Elton and Dennis Chitty from local observation reports for the Canadian Arctic Wild Life Enquiry, 1935-36, showing the state of the arctic fox and lemming populations in 1935-36 compared with 1934-35. Arrows indicate areas covered by observers reporting INCREASE (↑), DECREASE (↓), and NO CHANGE, ABUNDANT (→), and NO CHANGE, NOT ABUNDANT (←). Black dots are H B C posts and other settlements.

Reports were also made on the incidence of epidemic diseases among sled dogs because of the possible corelation between the occurrence of fox and dog epidemics, and the importance of the sled dogs to the northern inhabitants. Observers also reported on snowy owl populations at this time — 'For it is likely that the snowy owl, being the more mobile of these two predators, would precede the arctic fox to those areas where the food supply was improving.'

predicting the cycles did not require a knowledge of their cause. The Canadian Committee (which was the Company's Canadian 'Board', and exercised a good deal of control over affairs in Canada) was willing enough to accept this and decided that Elton's work was not likely to be of any direct benefit to the Company. Valuable as his research was, it seemed to the Committee that it was rather the duty of government than of the private sector to support it. Indeed, the Canadian Government might regard the Company's support of ecological research as interference in its own sphere. Acting upon these considerations, the Company resolved to pay no more grants to the Bureau of Animal Population.

Yet there is a way in which Elton's connection with the Company continues to this day. Through his writings, ecologists and zoologists are familiar with the Company as a source of data and as a helpful and responsible organization. While the Company did not support Elton's work as an exercise in public relations, its image has certainly benefitted, and deservedly so. One of the lasting results of Elton's research is his *Voles, Mice and Lemmings: Problems In Population Dynamics* (Oxford, 1942), and it is impossible to read it without being aware of Elton's debt to the Company.

The first half of *Voles, Mice and Lemmings* deals with rodent plagues around the world, the second mainly with the fox population in Labrador and Ungava. It has been called a classic of scientific literature, which it is, but it is more than that. While it is in no sense a popular or condescending book, neither should it be confined to a specialist readership. It is a book meant for anyone interested in the natural world and appreciative of good writing. Witty and humane, it is full of a warm sympathy for all involved in the fur trade. In fact when J.W. Anderson, the Ungava District Manager, vetted the book before publication, he commented that it would be 'good for "public consumption" ', as it painted such a compelling picture of the hard life of the fur trader. One chapter, 'Caribou Herds and Modern Trade', is a digression devoted to the caribou population, a subject of vital interest to the Naskapi Indians, whose livelihood and culture is bound up with the caribou. Elton much admired the Naskapi and their ability to make a life in their harsh land, and he hoped that modern science might help them to continue their traditional ways, and so remain among 'the uncrushable small peoples' of the earth. (Recent stories in the news about the Naskapis' determination to protest the effect of NATO's low-flying military aircraft which, they claim, frighten the caribou and threaten their way of life, suggests that their 'uncrushability' is intact.)

Elton's concern for the Naskapi and his hope that they might find a place in the twentieth century echoes the ideas that lay behind Sale's establishment of the

J. Cantley, H B C Collection

Inuit women hanging out white foxes to air at Lake Harbour, Baffin Island, 1919.

Development Department. Charles Sale is not a man who lacks for monuments (his fondness for building was one of the things the shareholders held against him) and Winnipeggers who enter the magnificent store on Portage Avenue, opened in November 1926, might pause to think of him. Yet *Voles, Mice and Lemmings* may prove to be the most enduring monument to his humane and innovative governorship. Published the year before Sale's death, the book had no dedication page, because of wartime restrictions on paper. In the Preface, however, Elton dedicated the book to the man whose 'foresight and energy . . . played such a large part in enabling me to start these investigations.'

But what of the Nachvack turnips? Among other conclusions, Elton does establish that the Labrador fox populations wax and wane according to a regular cycle, usually four years, but sometimes three or five. The changes in the fox population are tied to the changes in the lemming population, the peak year of the fox population following a year behind the peak year of the lemming population, as the foxes respond to the increase in their food supply. The year 1875, for example, the year after the wild mice made such inroads on the garden at Nachvack, was a peak year for foxes. Why does the lemming population rise and fall so dramatically? This is not yet known, for the mechanisms that control the lemming population are many and complex, and how they work together is not yet fully understood.

It is now sixty years since Elton began his research, and he would naturally prefer that his work and the work of his fellow scientists would have brought about a complete understanding of the cycles. In a paradoxical sense, however, the fact that Elton's work on cycles is still not complete is a tribute to the breadth of his scientific vision. For he has been motivated by a sense of wonder at the 'wildness and interest and beauty, [of] the unstable fabric of the living cosmos'. Recognizing the mysteries of nature can be as valuable as solving them. The knowledge that there is much that we do not know about our world may induce a proper humility and reverence in our stewardship of it.

The association of Charles Elton and the Hudson's Bay Company is also part of the story of Canada's growth in knowledge of and concern for the wildlife and natural environment for which we as Canadians bear so much responsibility. We should be grateful that Elton wrote to the Company and that the Company answered so generously. ♦

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:

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A significant record of social change in Canada over the past 35 years, as one 'Company' wife deals with her aspirations for a career that changed with every move of her husband from the east coast to the west and back again.

Company Wife

By Peggy Millard

Bert and Peggy Millard (née Robinson) in May 1949 when Bert graduated with his Bachelor of Commerce degree from Dalhousie University in Halifax.

Photographs are from the Millard family collection.

WE MET ON A TRAIN WHEN I was travelling to my first job, and Bert was en route to Halifax to a Royal Navy posting from New York where he had just arrived on the troopship *Queen Mary*. We married in Halifax and had several months together before his return to England and posting to the aircraft carrier HMS *Indefatigable*. At the end of the war, he was back in Halifax, a new immigrant, only a few days late for classes at Dalhousie University.

From 1943 to 1949, I worked as Dietitian-in-Charge of Shirreff Hall, Dalhousie University; and in summers I was Dean of Residence. Many of the young staff girls emigrated directly into my care from the Newfoundland Dominion of the British Empire. When Newfoundland signed the terms of Union on 11 December 1948 in Ottawa and joined Canada, these arrangements became easier. We lived through the riots marking Victory in Europe — and the frightening days of the explosions when the magazine near Bedford Basin blew up. Many of the older staff members — sensitized by the great Halifax explosion of 1917 — were terrified.

My husband, on graduation with his Bachelor of Commerce degree, was signed up on the Dalhousie campus by an astute Hudson's Bay Company scout, and our long association with 'The Bay' began officially on 6 June 1949.

This diary is not about a Hudson's Bay Company employee directly but about one ordinary Hudson's Bay Company wife and children — adventurers too, in every sense of the word — and how their lives were influenced over the years by the Company's decisions.

The Millard children, John, Jamie and Helen, with their mother on Easter Sunday, 21 April 1957 in Edmonton.

In June 1949 our first move was to Vancouver, that wonderful city on the rim of the Pacific. We went with great expectations, and a lot of enthusiasm but not much money: a packed lunch in a brown paper sack for my 'trainee' husband, and pork and beans for the last day or two of the month. The salary — $47.50 a week — did not go far enough, but picnic suppers on the beach with my brother and his wife were inexpensive and full of fun. It was soon obvious that if we were to afford a home and family, I must find a job. The Canadian Dietetic Association opened some doors, but the Children's Hospital was the only place requiring a temporary replacement. I took their job and meanwhile contacted the University of British Columbia where I later was officially appointed 'Dietitian-in-Charge and Lecturer'. Included in my responsibilities were catering to university functions (convocation teas and luncheons . . .), managing restaurants and large student residences and instructing home economic students at the university. We bought our first car for travelling out to the campus, and used it on holidays to explore the province together.

Our family increased; a daughter Helen was born and then a son Jamie, in September 1954. The Bay had family parties and at one summer party there was a great clown. Bert usually sang in the Christmas choir at the store early in the mornings prior to Christmas. There were often more than forty staff members and an organist, all in bright choir gowns. Our spirits were high at Christmas 1954, for my father, Dean Robinson, had decided to retire from medical practice after thirty-two years in Banff, and move to West Vancouver because of my mother's failing health. So we had a chance to enjoy a few years with my parents and other members of our family, who had been separated from us by the war.

The second posting was at hand, however, and after having been nearly six years in Vancouver, my husband was transferred to Edmonton, Alberta. In those days it was understood that chances were slim for future advancement if one refused to move. So in mid-February 1955, my husband left for Edmonton, while I stayed behind, and with a heavy heart sold the house. In March, I with the two children left Vancouver by train, arriving in snowy Edmonton where it was −15°F on the station platform with a biting wind. With this chilly welcome we were glad to have given away our tropical birds.

Our relocation gift to each other was our first television set. I was anticipating a few days in the Macdonald Hotel with my husband, perhaps even with diaper service, but on the day I arrived, he was moved to a motel where we lived for about six weeks until the Company house we were to rent was re-decorated. Most toys and clothes were in storage with the furniture, and it was not easy managing with two small children in a cramped motel room in winter. I knew no one in the city, and it was lonely.

A few days after moving into the house, Bert left for a buying trip to New York, Boston, Chicago, Montreal and Toronto for nearly a month. We had ordered curtains for the ground floor living-room windows but they had not arrived. (Moving expenses at that time included only curtains. Most Bay wives after several moves had curtains in different sizes and colours to try in a new house but I, on that first posting, had no selection.) All window fixtures had been removed and the wall re-plastered so I did not dare drive in nails to hang up even sheets for privacy. (Today, I would not hesitate.) After dark I was afraid to turn on the lights on the main floor when the children were in bed and I alone in the living room. Also, there was a shortage of telephones and we were told it would be several months before we could hope to have one. At this point my husband insisted there must be a phone in the house while he was away, for our baby boy was only six months old, and Helen was just over two years. The phone company removed the telephone almost as soon as he stepped back inside the door.

Then we settled in, contacted our new church, and later bought the Company house in which we were living.

Before long it was obvious that some decision had to be made for me to have employment outside the home. Although at that time it was not a popular thing for a woman with children to work (certainly many of

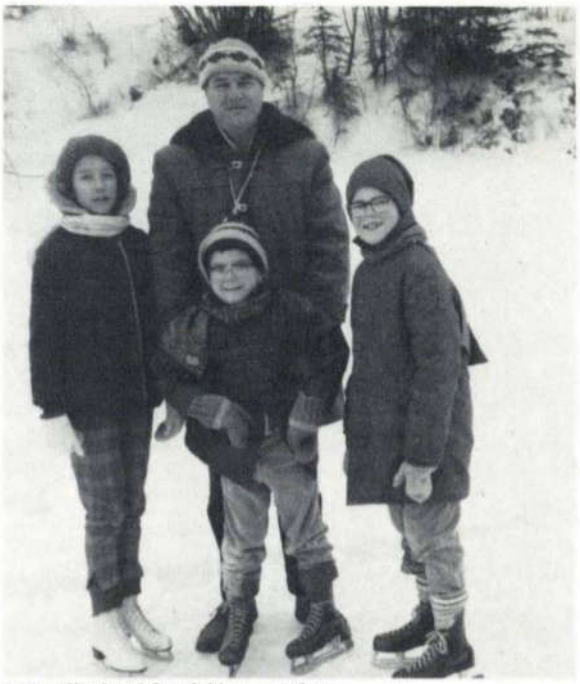
my university classmates had not worked professionally after graduation), it was a necessary step for financial reasons and for me for my personal development. Teaching adult night school — dressmaking and tailoring — for the Edmonton School Board filled the immediate bill, for my husband could usually arrange to be home those evenings. There appeared to be little opportunity for a hospital therapeutic dietitian or a commercial home economist to find a position that would fit in with raising a young family. A teaching certificate might afford a better chance of working during the school day, the same hours as the children. So I went back to university to study, got five credits, and teacher certification. Bert too started working towards his Registered Industrial Accountants degree in the evenings at the University of Alberta.

After some disastrous camping trips with our small children, we bought a blue and white trailer so we could holiday in relative comfort in the glorious mountains, especially near Banff. Then one day in a driving rainstorm we made a sad trip to Banff for the burial of my mother. A month later our third child John was born in Edmonton, and that was the completion of our family. Later we moved to a larger home in a new development across the North Saskatchewan River. The large corner lot had to be levelled, grassed and the fence put in. Although he did a fine job Bert declared that this was the last time he would ever try drilling post-holes in Alberta gumbo.

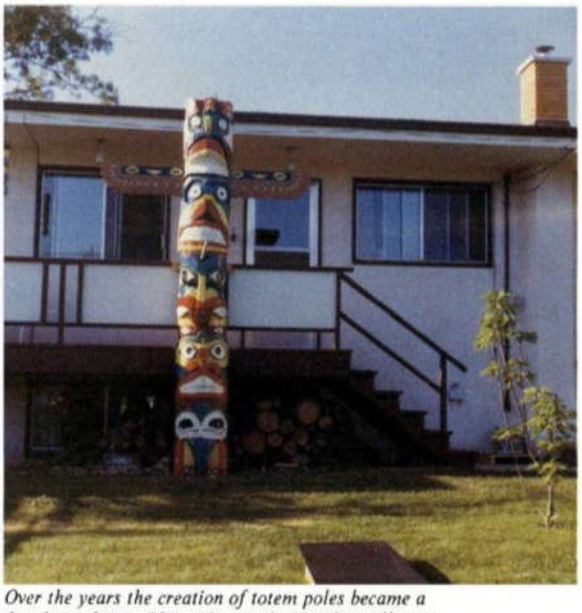
My fondest memories of Edmonton revolve around The Bay's store manager Ingar Telmer. Who can ever forget the warm Christmas parties at the Telmer home with him at the piano? It was a happy time each year for the children too with a noisy Company party, entertainment and individual gifts.

The children by this time were busy with school, music lessons and Sunday school. Both boys had eye operations and had to wear glasses, often taped on with tongue depressors when parts of the frames broke. We employed a cook who cleaned, looked after the children for lunch and after school, and had the supper meal prepared for us on week-days. For one glorious year I became an ash blonde instead of a brunette.

The Edmonton Public School Board used me first as a substitute home economics teacher in clothing and foods. Then they made me 'vocational consultant' for Victoria Vocational School, the first school of that kind, using federal funds as well as provincial ones. My experiences in commercial and health care helped me fit into a small group who worked with the architects on the whole physical plant: specifying, tendering and ordering every item for the school, with a federal completion date. The concept of vocational training in the regular school system brought up great problems never faced before. The traditional responsibility of education and the funding of education ensured a federal-



Bert Millard with his children, at White Mud Creek in Edmonton, 1964.



Over the years the creation of totem poles became a family tradition. This pole, nearly 12½ feet tall, was made in sections by each member to celebrate the Canadian Centennial in 1967 and the Company's 300th anniversary in 1970.

provincial tug-of-war. The teachers' union took a lot of convincing to allow trades people 'years of experience' and tenure on the salary grid as vocational teachers. Another enormous step was the curricula planning and building, where practical work and theory had to dovetail into regular education. Finding and designing manuals and textbooks was time-consuming. During this period I was hardly ever home, for we worked late into the long nights. When the vocational school actually opened I felt it was time to be in touch with my family again. I asked for a position near home and was given a school to teach in across the street — a propitious assignment. But one day when my husband appeared at the classroom door in the mid-afternoon I knew that there was news of some import. 'Montreal? When do they have to know?' I asked. 'By five o'clock *this* afternoon!'

I looked forward to going back to cosmopolitan Montreal and Montreal Island where I spent my university years and later did dietetic internship at the famous Royal Victoria Hospital and the Montreal Neurological Institute. The children were dubious, but when told of the new experience ahead, entered into the preparations with excitement, particularly as they were allowed to decide whether we would fly down or go by train. They chose the latter. We now prepared to shift body, soul and family possessions. Bert flew to Montreal on 19 May 1964 and we waited to finish the school year. The children's school records, medical and dental data, inoculation and immunization records had to be collected, and all other activities and lessons cancelled. The children were still worried about leaving their friends. What could we say to comfort them? We decided that the children, from now on, must concentrate on individual and not team sports. It was too difficult to pull them out of league play and virtually impossible for them to try to break into a league in a new city. My resignation went in and I learned that my teacher's pension was not portable to Quebec.

The Company took the Edmonton house over, for we had lived there less than two years. It was a relief not to have to sell, for, as usual, the market was soft. I was becoming proficient in moving. Before the movers arrived I remembered to empty all waste-baskets and throw out all old toothpaste tubes so they would not arrive, gift-wrapped, at the other end. I saw that someone came in early to pack the fine china in wooden tea-boxes or barrels and mark the boxes with the rooms they were slated to go into. The fish tanks were emptied and the fish disposed of; the houseplants, not surprisingly, never seemed to survive any move. Each scratch and gouge in the furniture was touch painted by the movers each time — so that gradually even treasured items began to look worn and ordinary. An old saying of my mother's may be true: 'A move is as bad as a fire'.

Bert had located a modest house at the western tip of Montreal Island in my favourite town of Ste Anne de Bellevue. (It had a beautiful yard surrounded on three sides by a tall cedar hedge.) We determined long ago that because of the continual uncertainty of the time frame of any move, we would try to assume each time that it was the final move and we would put down roots by buying a house and establishing the family securely. Each move, we decided, should be regarded as a great adventure for us all. My husband had continuity and knew many people at work each time. That was a help in his re-location, but it was still a time of stress, and commuting by train and bus into Montreal was a new experience. His night classes continued at McGill University and he had to be picked up at Beaconsfield on class nights, after the late bus.

My hard-won position and friends in Edmonton were past history, and a new start had to be made. The children missed their friends, and would now try to break into new peer groups and a strange school system. Historically each province is responsible for its own educational system; they jealously guard this right with the result that there are great variations in grade levels and curriculum. Sometimes our children repeated subjects like Social Studies - Canada and missed Social Studies - Great Britain entirely because one province taught 'Canada' in grade four and 'Britain' in grade five or vice versa. The older children now required extra French in order to catch up to their classmates. They had to be driven down Montreal Island to another village school, after hours, to attend these. It was an opportunity for us all to use and improve our limited French. I enjoyed driving into a gas station and discovering that 'rempli' was colloquial for 'fill-er-up' and that 'trente-sous' was a 'quarter'.

The children settled in at the Macdonald College School of the Macdonald Protestant Central School Board, a model school of high calibre. We attended the little Union Church nearby. A piano teacher from Montreal who came out each weekend to teach, agreed to squeeze in our children. They joined Brownies and Cubs and looked for new items at the skate and ski exchange. Generally in the village the French-Canadian children skated and the English-Canadian skied. Our children enjoyed both sports, and the rinks nearby were outside, just what they were used to.

Now it was my turn to try to find employment, not easy in this Francophone world. Teacher certification would take more university training in the province of Quebec and could not be started until the children were settled. Supply teaching in home economics was offered, however, in the Montreal Protestant School System, in the Lakeshore and West Islands Commissions. I was called to fill in, at seven to eight o'clock any morning, at any school.

Then a surprise call came from the principal of La Cité des Jeunes at historic Lac des Deux Montagnes, Dorion-Vaudreuil, just a few miles from home. This was a French vocational pilot school, the pet project of M. Gerin-Lajoie, Minister of Education in the Jean Lesage government, and in his riding. I agreed to teach grade two level English to grade eleven students, and to grade twelve commercial students for at least seven weeks while the regular teacher was on maternity leave. The charming principal, in halting English, asked me to fill in the necessary papers but to leave a blank beside 'religion'.

'Never mind Jean-Luc, Madame Mee-lar, he is a separatist' is how one charming girl explained a sullen and uncommunicative youth in the back of one class. Most of the students were a delight and made me feel quite special. Two surprising things struck me. One had to do with the aspirations of the young women. They appeared to have thrown off the traditional French-Canadian female model and role. They did not intend to stay in the kitchen; they wanted freedom and careers, and were very outspoken about it. The young men seemed to be confused and a little apprehensive about the new female attitude. The other thing that surprised me was the militancy the students showed in siding with their teachers and the teachers' union in dealing with the Ministry of Education and other authorities. Issues were openly discussed in the classroom and pupils picketed along with the teachers. The principal offered me a permanent position for the future, which I declined to consider.

In the fall we enjoyed the magnificent colours of the leaves as we drove through the Laurentians during that magic week when the maple leaves are at their best. We found it hard to wait for the maple sugaring-off which usually occurred in March. When we saw the steam rising from remote sugar shacks we knew it was time to go into the bush and to pour the hot syrup on the clean snow, roll the taffy full of ice crystals on a stick or twig, and eat. Like other serious taffy-eaters, we took along a bottle of dill pickles.

We saw the new Canadian flag displayed at the first snowmobile meet on Lac des Deux Montagnes in early 1965.

More interviews led to various offers: home economics and guidance high school teaching in the Catholic, English-speaking system and in the Montreal and Island Protestant School. Macdonald College offered several starting jobs as instructor, lecturer or dietitian. The Royal Victoria Hospital in Montreal required a hospital dietitian to do a research study for a group of doctors but the commuting time made it unfeasible. When I contacted Helen Neilsen, head of Home Economics at Macdonald-McGill, she was encouraging and suggested that there was other freelance work around. It was like being offered a silver tea tray of fine pastries. Which ones could be managed while keeping things on an even keel on the home-front? Preparing dossiers and going to interviews was time-consuming in itself.

The Millard children on the back lawn in Senneville, Quebec, autumn 1964.

James Beard, the famous chef, needed a home economist for his series of television cooking shows 'Screen Gems' out of Montreal. It was a new experience for me, and worth the long hours during actual taping in the studio.

The owner of one of Montreal's fine restaurants contacted me through the university and asked me to work out a time-table to upgrade his establishment for Expo '67. Menus were to be prepared and recipes developed for French cuisine. From chefs down, the kitchen and dining-room staffs were to be re-organized and re-trained. After the initial job was done I would continue as consultant, responsible to the owner. The outline was prepared, accepted and I was to begin work at the beginning of September 1965.

And then in August 1965 my husband was told that we were to be in Winnipeg, Manitoba, by Labour Day. We broke the news to the children about the next great adventure but they were older now, had recently moved, and could see the upheaval and readjustment ahead. Besides, I, their mother, wasn't adjusting as well as usual. My kind and quiet husband knew this would be a real ordeal for me. It was our hardest move; I simply did not want to go through all the turmoil and face the harsh climate as well. Yet in retrospect in Winnipeg

I found the warmest friends and the most rewarding work of all.

We arrived in Winnipeg on Labour Day in a driving rain and cold wind, indicative of that whole miserable long first winter. To add to my despair, the movers squashed all of my beautiful hats, even though they were packed with special care. We spent a day or two at the Fort Garry Hotel and then went to a motel in Westwood until we could move into the house. Meanwhile the children, with all their records, started to school. This sounds easier than it was.

We then discovered that all three children required extensive orthodontic work and they all regularly needed glasses. Did they have to play follow the leader? These years were their teen years when the peer group was important and influential. Each child had to deal with this problem separately. Music helped and they were all, at various times, involved in operettas, playing the piano, singing, acting and composing as well as their regular Toronto Conservatory exams. We had three pianos for a time, with practising being done concurrently and the noise had a strange layered medley effect. Our church was not far away and Sunday school, Canadian Girls in Training and the other usual groups were joined. It was in Winnipeg that, for the first time, I went uncomfortably to church without a hat.

Each time we moved it seemed to take about a year for the children to settle in, and well over that for me to start getting results from job interviews. So it was important to get going at once. I started substitute teaching in Assiniboine North School Division # 2, while waiting for the bookwork to be done for teacher certification in Manitoba. Permission was given to me, through Bert, to do historical research in the library at Hudson's Bay House. It was a rare opportunity and the Company Librarian Shirlee Anne Smith was most helpful.

The University of Manitoba determined it would take five additional courses for me to acquire a Bachelor of Education (Special Education) degree so I started and completed several credits. My husband continued his studies at the University of Manitoba and was granted his Registered Industrial Accountant degree on 3 February 1968. He had worked hard for this, on three different campuses, and we were proud of his achievement.

Helen Jantzen, Manitoba Provincial Supervisor of Home Economics, asked me to work on a Special Services Curriculum Committee at the Department of

Peggy Millard with a pupil, Principal Andy Otchenash (left), and a volunteer worker from 'Telephone Pioneers' who installed a switchboard for training and coordination purposes in the Kirkfield Park School for Exceptional Children, Winnipeg, 1967. Mrs Millard, after much research and discussion, persuaded the school board to turn the school into a unit designed for youngsters who had little or no previous exposure to school life.

Education in November 1966. No salary was offered but I accepted with pleasure. It was to be the start of long hours on various provincial advisory committees where curriculum guides and evaluation strategies were among the important developments. I served on provincial committees until I left the province in 1972.

In the meantime the superintendent for Assiniboine North School District # 2 hired me on a part-time basis to start 3 January 1967 as 'Administrator in Special Education'. In May I was appointed full-time 'Director of Special Education', and in December of that year it was expanded again to 'Special Assistant to the Superintendent'. The duties were to cover home economics, special education, vocational-occupational education, evening classes for adults, Saturday and vacation schools for students needing help, bussing arrangements throughout the division and public relations work.

The Council for Exceptional Children Convention in 1968 in New York City was the first convention I attended. It had about 10,000 delegates, and was an education in itself. A letter from the American Guidance Service, Inc. addressed me as Ms Millard in October 1968 — the first time I had seen the letters Ms in actual use.

The most exciting assignment the superintendent placed in my hands was the responsibility of 'finding' the trainable retarded children in our division and equipping and staffing Kirkfield Park School for them. We developed special curricula and saw remarkable things happen to the children in our care. We also saw bitter in-fighting by parents of 'regular' children at school board meetings, which disappointed and saddened us all.

The party celebrating the Hudson's Bay Company's 300th anniversary held in Winnipeg on Saturday, 2 May 1970 was unforgettable. The Company called it 'the biggest bash in the history of Manitoba — maybe even the West'. No one from the Company who was in Winnipeg at that time will forget the satin-breeched, buckle-shoed, bewigged gentlemen and their ladies; the top-hats and the bustles; the Indian chiefs, braves and maidens; and voyageurs, and bears — and real horses tethered outside. This was the first opportunity for the wives of the staff to meet the new president, Donald S. McGiverin. He was charming and looked fit and right at home.

The same year our son Jamie won an award for piano composition in the City of St James-Assiniboia Centennial School project.

My old superintendent passed away, and the new superintendent appointed me supervisor of home economics for the enlarged St James-Assiniboia School Division # 2. I soon started working on architectural plans for the Sturgeon Creek Regional School Building Committee. This was the first such school in this area and it was stimulating to be working again on this vocational concept.

My position had now been enlarged to include the vice-principalship of a new junior high school, with vocational aspects that I helped to build into it when on the building committee for Assiniboine North. At this time the women teachers were agitating to be allowed — for the first time — to wear slacks to school. The principals demurred, but I was photographed wearing a tailored navy and leather-trimmed tunic pant suit in school. This opened the doors, a practical measure for cold winter days.

The superintendent and the board allowed me to continue travelling to and reporting on conferences and conventions, some of the larger being the American Vocational Association in Cleveland 1970 and Denver, Colorado in 1971. (One speech by a rabid feminist frightened me into starting Saturday morning cooking classes for my sons and their boy friends immediately on my return.) Finally I attended the Canadian Home Economics Association Conference in Halifax in July 1972.

The Millards, dressed for the Company's 300th anniversary party, Winnipeg, 2 May 1970.

In the spring, 1971, Peggy Millard, then Vice Principal of Hedges School in Winnipeg, dared to become the first woman to appear in a Winnipeg class-room wearing a pant suit.

there, at Company expense, trying to find a home we could afford in a suitable area in a highly volatile market. Eventually it was my sister who bought us a home, for there was no time for us to get to Toronto in time to bid on a desirable place. In August 1972 we took possession of our new home, with a pool and landscaped garden in North York. The boys and Helen completed their summer jobs in Winnipeg, their university transcripts were transferred to the University of Toronto, and suitable music teachers found at the Toronto Conservatory. The children were now ready to go, again easier said than done.

My overtures to the North York School Board, started while still in Winnipeg, were not promising. First it was necessary to get a Secondary School Letter of Standing, in order to teach at all. The usual official transcripts had to be acquired directly from the various provinces and universities attended. It was a time-consuming process, and they would not accept copies of documents. Eventually interim documents were issued by the Province of Ontario. After starting to teach I was urged to apply for the principal's course — sec-

Then my husband was transferred in the 'big move' to Toronto. I was pleased about this, for it brought me close to my sister who had been ill. My teacher's pension was not portable to Toronto, of course.

There were different reactions to this move by the children. John hated leaving his friends, and his judo competitions had to be suspended. Jamie, finishing first year science at the University of Manitoba at 17, was happy about the transfer because his girl-friend had recently moved to Toronto. This would certainly solve the long distance phone problem we had been struggling with at home. He kept asking his father to look for a house in Scarborough. Jamie had been planning a medical career, a real possibility at the University of Manitoba, but no one had any idea of the competition he would find at the University of Toronto. Eventually he moved in a different direction after graduation. In retrospect, we feel he wasn't ready to live on his own in Winnipeg, and of course he was eager for personal reasons to make the move with us.

Our daughter Helen was in tears. She must now finish her last year at the University of Toronto, transfer to the Conservatory and find new teachers for the assault on her music degree. We could not afford to, nor did we want to leave her behind in Winnipeg. A move at this age is difficult for young people and this one was undoubtedly the hardest for our children.

The Company appraised our Winnipeg home and took it off our hands. This was the only time we made money on the sale of the house. My husband travelled to Toronto once, and we both spent another week-end

The Home Economics teacher at St James-Assiniboia School Division No. 2 is visited by Supervisor Peggy Millard in 1970.

ondary section, but this was disallowed because a permanent certificate would not be issued for a specific time. I applied later, went through the interviews — one of which was particularly distasteful. It was conducted by three or four principals in a small office, where I was grilled and turned down because I had not taught in elementary, junior high and senior high schools in Ontario. My distinct impression was that unless I had come up through the ranks in North York and was a man, forget it. Career choices? There would be no tray of delicacies here from which to choose. But I had been warned in Winnipeg and again by the Home Economics Supervisor from North York whom I had met at the convention in Halifax in July, that chances in the Toronto area, and particularly in North York, were doomed before they were started. A career might have opened up north of the city, but the school district reached to Barrie and the possibility of a transfer to a remote school would not have fitted in with family responsibilities. There was a part-time position to start with at Georges Vanier Secondary School in North York; then I transferred to teach full-time at a nearby Junior High School, grades 7 to 9. It was convenient and pleasant.

Meanwhile our daughter graduated with a B.A. from the University of Toronto, and received her A.R.C.T. (Performers) — from the Toronto Conservatory. Then she married and moved — gone from us back to Winnipeg and her own life, to teach school, library, and music. Many Company couples have 'dropped' children along the way where they were posted. It leaves a continual ache in the heart. One Company wife said to me recently 'When my friends here tell about baby-sitting their grandchildren, I can hardly stand it.'

Our grandsons hardly know us, very different from the traditional extended family many people still are able to enjoy. Somehow when we are young and ambitious, we do not think of our children choosing to return to cities or provinces in which they lived in a formative period. For us they were just steps along the way.

Because experience was needed at a senior high school in Ontario, in order to be accepted in the principal's course, I decided to transfer and teach again at the Georges Vanier School near the Peanut Plaza. In grade 12, Early Childhood Education was a rewarding course with students doing practical work in elementary, nursery and day schools in the area. The stimulating family course for Grade 13 was also exciting to teach. It is the class-room where the action is, daily — that is the only reason for the whole education monolith.

The school, I found, was pervaded by fear, the result of the lack of personal discipline in some students, and the lack of support from the administrative office in this regard. The fear felt by other students and the female staff seemed to make the teaching of many of the lower classes little more than a baby-sitting assignment. Except for the grades 12 and 13 classes, the pleasure and joy of teaching had flown.

One of the greatest humiliations I suffered was being forced to take part in the secondary teachers' first strike — something unthinkable even one week earlier. I chose to walk the line outside the school early in the cold mornings and get it over with for the day. It was a distasteful, damaging and unforgettable experience. Before long I was 'bumped' during the drastic teacher cut-back, for the time spent teaching in Ontario, and ultimately Toronto, was the final criterion of tenure.

Over the years, experience has convinced me that a woman has to be better at her job and work longer and harder than a man in a parallel position, in order to just keep up. She must be lucky and be there at the right time too. She has more hurdles to clear and must prove herself over and over again. Finally after many struggles, growing older and more experienced at knowing the cost, and the chances, she throws up her hands in frustration and says 'That is enough'. So after many years of teaching and working, my husband who had put up with much for my career, felt it was time for me to resign. This I gladly did.

John was now through university with a B.Sc., a brown belt in Judo and a passion for skiing. He decided to go west to the province of his birth, and seek a future in the management of handicapped adults (with whom he had worked as counselor for several summers at Camp Reena near Palgrave, Ontario). He lives in Calgary, and although we are pleased with his marriage and proud of his dedication to the people he is serving, we miss him.

In Toronto our elder boy Jamie with his music and a formal science-research orientation, startled us by deciding to follow in his father's footsteps. But the Company does not allow relatives in. The Hudson's Bay Company is the one place he cannot go, so he chose another firm. He is out on his own now in Toronto and we see him often.

And what does this retired Company wife find time to do in the period called 'the empty nest'? Certainly I have few friends outside the work world, and my sister has long since died. At first it was enjoyable being at home during the week, watching some daytime television and spending time on hobbies. Then I turned to volunteer work at the Canadian Institute for the Blind where I read books into tapes. Some are recreational reading books, but most are university textbooks and graduate materials. I spend two to three half-days at the studio and another three hours a week reading directly to an elderly blind friend.

In conclusion, how do I assess the years? The comfort, security and well-being of my husband and children were always paramount. Home was to be a haven that the whole family wanted to come back to

The Millard grandchildren, Alec and Ian La Rue of Pinawa, Manitoba, 19 December 1984.

after the stress of the day. It was also to be a place of mental stimulation and moral support to all members. Around this I tried to build a satisfying life, using my education and experience to help make things more financially secure. Aspirations for the children, the importance of music and further education, the stress on excellence, may have put more strain on them than we thought — although we recognized too that there is a 'readiness' time when these things needed to be done or else the possibility of achieving excellence in the future was doubtful, if not impossible.

The sad and difficult things have been the upheavals and wrenchings from relatives and friends, and for me the complete career-stops. The relocation traumas, house-hunting, the children's adjustments and the career searching at each new place have shaped and affected us all. The 'extended family' vacuum, the loneliness particularly at 'special' times, and my gradual personality change into a 'loner' who dares not rely on anyone else except husband and children for fear of the hurt of another move and friendship fracture — these are some of the legacies. It seems strange to me that I have actually been in my husband's office no more than two or three times in 35 years.

The good and positive things mainly revolve around my Company husband's work, and the children's development through the years into resourceful, decent and loving human beings. Living in many provinces has been a series of unforgettable experiences. We all have some understanding and appreciation of the scope and beauty of this country, and a keen interest in its future.

What of the future? I have been my husband's wife for nearly 40 years and a Company wife for 35 years — almost a lifetime. A Hudson's Bay wife — an adventurer too, integrally bound up with the Hudson's Bay Company but never part of that business world. There is always the hope that before my husband retires, he will come to me again with a last Company posting. Perhaps it will be back to the West, to Vancouver where we started this remarkable journey. ♦

Northern Coloured Light on Parliament Hill

By Allen D. Macartney

The husky dog, vital to native and explorer, played a significant role in opening up Canada's North. Here, the animal is atop the Yukon window.

HIGH ABOVE THE HOUSE OF COMMONS floor, late afternoon sun streams through the Gothic-style windows of Canada's Parliament Buildings. Cast in delicate hues of red, blue and golden yellow, the visitors' gallery is softly bathed in colour from the windows dedicated to the Yukon and Northwest Territories.

Part of a larger project to install stained-glass windows in the House of Commons, these two works highlighting Canada's Arctic are most suitably located at the chamber's north and northwest side. Muted tones, varying with the sun's movement throughout the day, were chosen to complement Parliament Hill's Victorian architecture.

Eleanor Milne, the Dominion sculptor and designer of the project, says: 'The work really is based on colour.' To capture a distinct northern flavour, Milne created the windows with easily perceived arctic themes.

Because the tundra bursts forth in a kaleidoscopic celebration of wild flowers each spring, both windows highlight the North's abundant flora. The legendary husky, crucial in the early development of the Arctic, is featured atop the Yukon's window.

As Canada's Parliament Buildings are internationally recognized as some of the finest examples of Western architectural design, the importance of creating a lasting artistic masterpiece was recognized from the very beginning. Milne worked with the glass to contribute creatively to an overall mood of hushed majesty in the chamber. She achieved this primarily through colour.

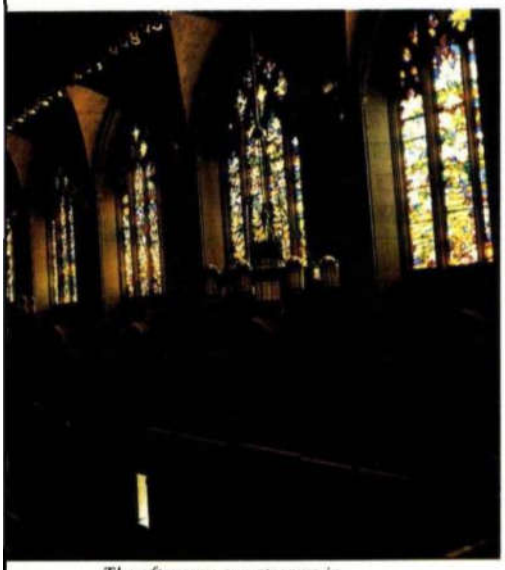
'When we make a colour in glass, it is not done by painting the glass; the colour is in the glass itself. . . . Chemicals and ground-up rocks are mixed with white glass — ordinary window glass,' says Milne. Chemically-coloured silica is made fast in the glass and does not fade. Subtle colour tones should remain for over eight hundred years.

This process is both long and very costly. 'Red glass cannot be made without using pure gold. Selenium glass is yellow . . . (and) was very hard to get,' explains Milne. Partly for this reason, the glass is not produced in Canada but imported from Britain, France, Belgium, West Germany and the United States.

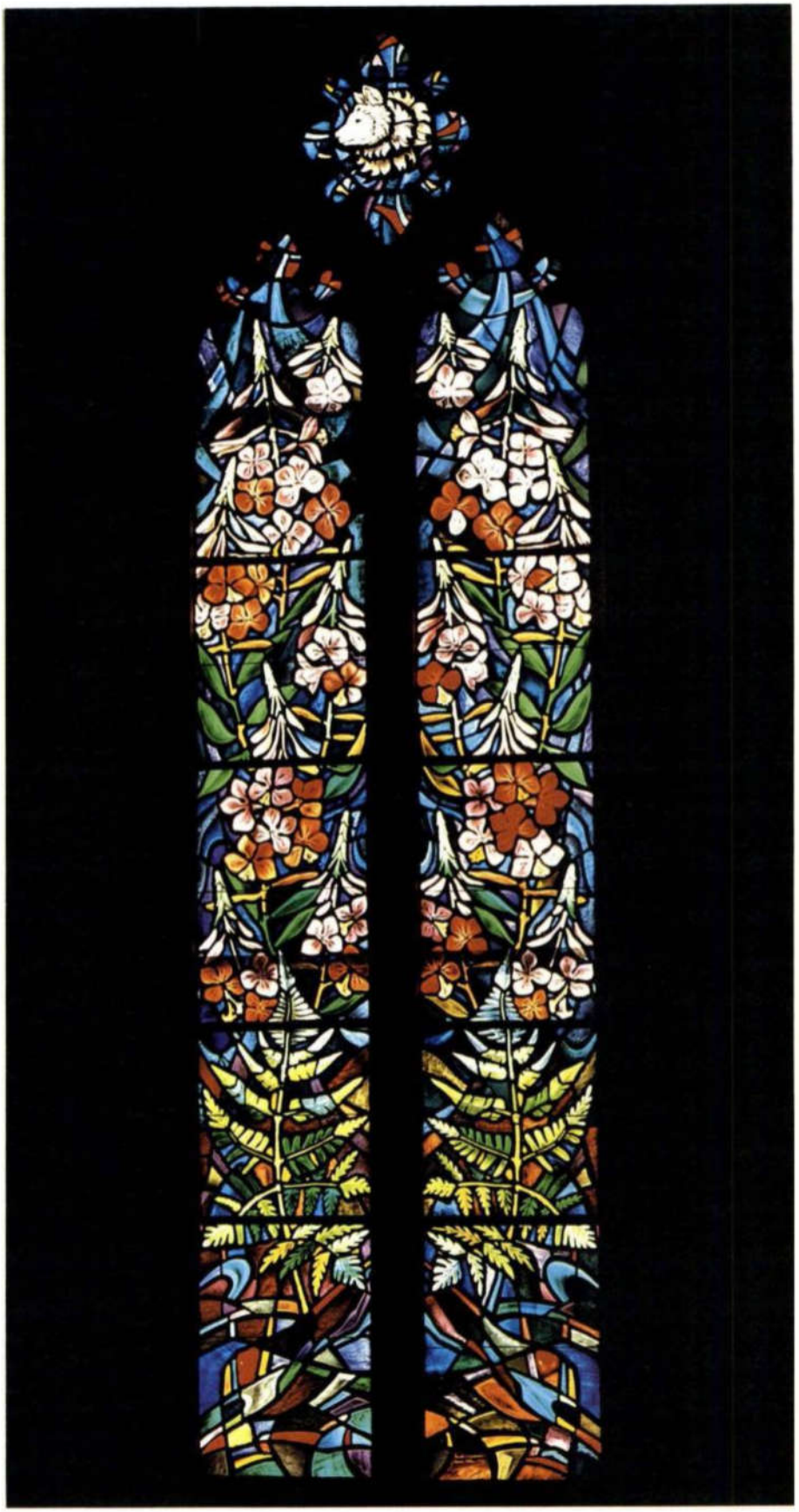
Supplied in sheets measuring two feet by three feet, the glass was cut from patterns and built up like a giant jigsaw puzzle. 'It's something like cutting out a dress pattern,' says Miss Milne. The individual pieces were then mounted in soft lead, and supported by small bars to prevent buckling. Once installed, the support bars disappeared in the design.

'Design is like rhythm, it is like music,' says Milne. When you enter the chamber of the House of Commons you are indeed treated to a rich symphony of colour — a celebration of Canada's northern beauty. ♦

Ferns, wild flowers and the husky dog dominate the Yukon window.



The afternoon sun streams in through stained-glass windows, creating a gentle majestic mood in the House of Commons.



Photographer and author Allen Macartney lives in Ottawa and travels extensively in the northern territories.

He thanks M. Leger at the Parliamentary Library for his valuable assistance.

Winnipeg Land Politics in the 1870s

By Randy R. Rostecki

FOR OVER A CENTURY, the circumstances and events surrounding the incorporation of the City of Winnipeg during 1873 have been misinterpreted and misrepresented. Legend has attributed the rough road experienced by the local residents to the Hudson's Bay Company in its efforts to avoid taxation upon their undeveloped Fort Garry Reserve. The entrepreneurs triumphed in November 1873 when the Incorporation Bill passed through the Legislature. Nowhere has there been anything to suggest why the supposed Company pressure was relieved at that time, nor has any suggestion been made as to why the other large landowners were not more vocal in their protestations, for incorporation would have affected their interests more keenly than those of the Company.

In essence, the Winnipeg of the 1870s was divided between the so-called 'private' landholders north of Notre Dame Street, and the Fort Garry Reserve of the Honourable Company. This latter tract consisted of some five hundred acres surrounding Upper Fort Garry, as ceded to the Company in the Deed of Surrender, 1869, and confirmed in subsequent Orders in Council in 1870 and 1871. During 1872, the Reserve was plotted into a townsite named 'Selkirk' by the Company, which, in the absence of any incorporated local government, sought to attract physical development to its section of the settlement. Indeed, the Reserve was immediately put up for sale in July 1872, with many prominent Winnipeggers emerging as eager purchasers. Their townsite — with its 50′x120′ lots, wide (20′) back lanes and even wider streets (66′) — represented an excellent attempt at imposing order on the prairies and was probably Winnipeg's first attempt at town planning.

To the north of this lay the private holdings of the Winnipeggers. Initially, these lands had represented the grants to the Selkirk settlers in the early part of the nineteenth century. The tracts consisted of river front lots of varying widths, running west two miles to the local haying privilege. With the passage of time, these lots were sold and subdivided among settler descendants or newcomers. In most cases, the lands were held for the intrinsic purpose of agriculture; by the early 1860s, however, a certain group had begun to emerge among these landholders who did not follow agrarian pursuits. Some, such as A. G. B. Bannatyne or Henry McKenney, used their holdings for business pursuits. Other prominent businessmen and entrepreneurs like E. L. Barber, Andrew McDermot, James Ross or John Christian Schultz, dealt solely in lands from a revenue point of view, though the other merchants spied the value in real estate after a time. These men formed the embryo of the fledgling Winnipeg real estate community.

Among the land speculators, there were basically two important points of origin — within the Colony and from without the Colony. The former group caught on to the merits of speculation rather slowly, and usually only after seeing their newer neighbours in action. To a large extent, their lands were still held for the old agrarian purposes. The newer group, on the other hand were Canadian in origin, with a few American agitators included. These were largely young, aggressive Ontarians who had seen the methods of speculation in the Boom of 1857 and were about to apply the methods to the northwestern frontier of the 1860s and 1870s.

A characteristic of these Ontario expansionists was their hatred for the Hudson's Bay Company, because of its civil authority in the area. Ostensibly, the monopoly of the Company was perceived by the expansionists as contributing to the fact that Rupert's Land was still a wilderness with very sparse settlement. In short, the Company was seen as standing in the way of progress. This was only a half-truth as 'progress' generally meant a future in land speculation for these gentlemen, and obviously, any body which controlled the destiny of such a large tract of real estate would let no others have a 'share of the wealth'. This movement began in the agitation not to renew the Company charter in 1857 and culminated in the purchase of Rupert's Land in 1869-70.

Though the Company monopoly and patriarchy ended in 1870, its control of the reserves ensured that

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The southern part of Winnipeg village in 1873, Upper Fort Garry in the distance.

the anti-Company feelings of the expansionists were not laid to rest. A land patent was not forthcoming on the Fort Garry Reserve until 1873 and until that time the Company's ownership was doubted, chiefly by the more vocal expansionists, despite the Orders in Council of 1869-70. Attempts were made by certain Winnipeggers, among them Schultz's father-in-law, James Farquharson, to seize portions of the Reserve. In fact, in the summer of 1872, several squatter dwellings were under the course of erection upon the Reserve without Company permission. The gist of this movement was marked by a jealousy of Company activities by the Winnipeggers.

Paramount in this paranoia was the fact that the Company had obtained certain Dominion Government buildings, as well as the Dominion Government Reserve, at the west end near Colony Creek. As the important Post Office and Savings Bank site was not fixed until 1874, the Winnipeggers were afraid that the Company might secure all governmental structures, thereby 'freezing-out' their interests in the race to gain the business district. As a result, the Hudson's Bay Company 'became' the mortal enemy of the Winnipeggers, and would be considered as such even into the late 1870s.

In fact, the Company was looking to its best interests in attempting to attract development to its quarter, and was, to a remarkable degree, operating in a fashion similar to that of the Winnipeggers. Basically, the rivalry became a contest of wits as to who would hold the important cards of land development in the area. When the Company subdivided its lands, the Winnipeggers were doing the same. Each sought important buildings and functions for their holdings. In turn, each sector could have harboured the central business district when one emerged, for matters were still in a state of flux in the early 1870s. The attitude of the Winnipeggers became one of belligerency toward their rival, and there was nothing gentlemanly about their hostility. In fact, during the election riot of 19 September 1872, local newspaper offices were smashed. It is of little significance that the plants of *Le Métis,* the *Gazette* and the *Manitoban,* (the former pair housed in the same building) were simultaneously destroyed. The disturbance had been anti-French in nature, but the *Manitoban* had been marked by the Winnipeg element as pro-Company in sentiment.

Initially, the movement to incorporate Winnipeg did not appear to involve the Hudson's Bay Company. The first murmurings were heard early in 1872, when Alexander Begg's *Trade Review* advocated the measure as a means of securing Winnipeg's future as the new Chicago. The initial reaction of the *Manitoban* to Begg's editorial was to challenge the statements and to ask

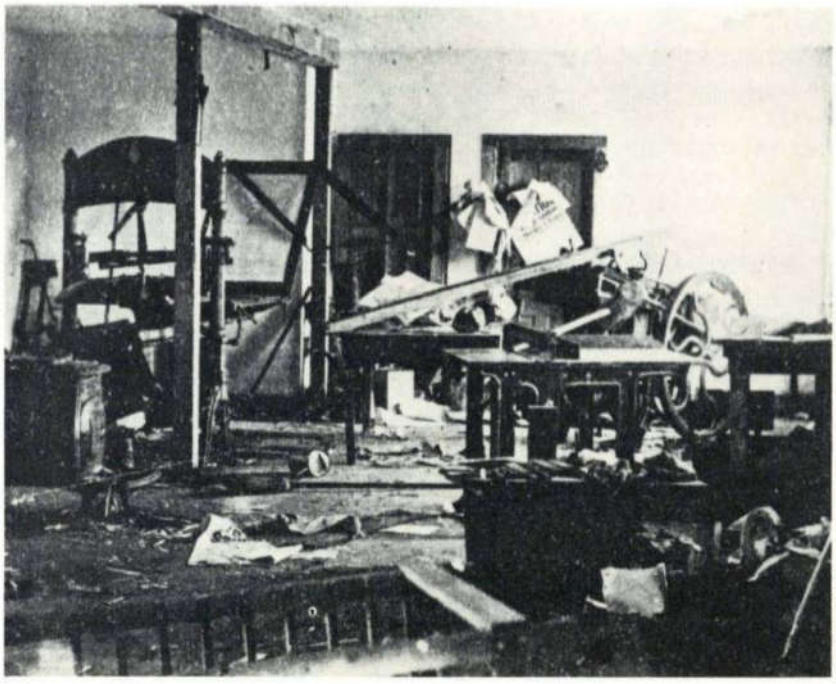
certain questions. Some four months later, the same journal came out with an anti-incorporation editorial, stating that the population of three or four hundred was too small to foster a city and suggesting that certain local characters merely wanted aldermanic positions. To a certain degree this latter suggestion may have been quite true, for civic officials could be responsible for swinging development to one part of the town or another, depending where certain key real estate interests lay. Civic improvements and public buildings would enhance the value of property in a certain locality, and thus, such public office became desirable.

As for size, the *Manitoban* considered Winnipeg to be in the 'veriest state of embryo'. 'If Winnipeg is to grow, as it is anticipated, the town must grow towards Point Douglas and beyond it; and towards Fort Garry, and up the Assiniboine, and out west on the prairie.' That journal appeared to encompass a notion of a 'Greater Winnipeg' many years before the term became popular, instead of pulling for growth toward one end or another of the town. But in terms of physical size, the population was as yet too small to sustain major programs of road grading, drainage, lighting or other improvements. In short, the *Manitoban* advocated a slow-down in Winnipeg's metropolitan ambitions until a decent tax base formed.

For this, the *Manitoban* was cast as the supporter of the Hudson's Bay Company, because the Winnipeggers possessed the 'most remarkable species of philosophy' that they regarded 'their interests as diametrically opposed to the interests of the Company'. Indeed, the *Manitoban* argued, 'The Company is no longer a huge monopoly, but a mere business firm'. Subsequent research has proven that the Company's power was broken after 1870, and that it was just another business house. But the traditional anti-Company view of the expansionists made for a convenient excuse for placing the blame; in short, the Hudson's Bay Company could do nothing right in the eyes of the Winnipeggers. In counter to the *Manitoban*'s statements, however, the *Gazette* declared that the people of Winnipeg did not expect the Company to neglect its interests, but that they did not want the Company to obtain unequal advantages because of its supposed power and influence.

The incorporation movement waned somewhat during the summer of 1872, only to resume increasing importance in the late fall. It was considered that 'this place has increased to such an extent that the revenue arising from municipal taxation would in itself be sufficient to make the town independent of aid from the not over-filled Government chest.' Winnipeg's permanent population had risen from approximately 773 in June 1872 to about 1,467 by the beginning of November. This numerical increase, though not large in sheer size, represented a doubling of population which would make journals such as the *Gazette* quite optimistic in reviving the incorporation movement. The opening of the Dominion Lands for settlement largely accounted for this.

In the early winter of 1872-73 everyone locally supported the incorporation movement, for not a dissenting voice was to be heard on the matter. Even *Le Métis*,



Manitoba Archives

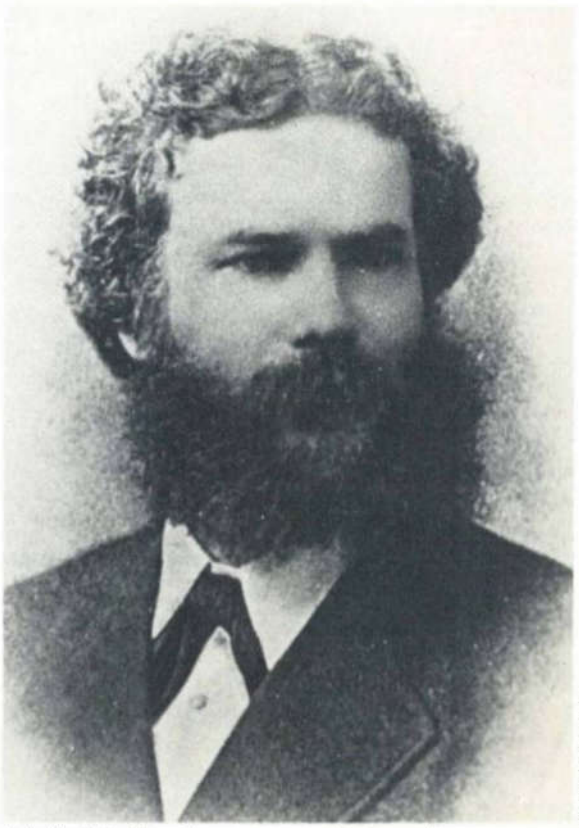
The wrecked offices of the 'Manitoban' newspaper after the election riot of 19 September 1872. The paper had been seen as pro-Company in sentiment and opponents had no time to write letters to the editor.

hitherto known as keeping a keen eye on English doings, whole-heartedly supported the measure, stating that Winnipeg's streets, drainage, public health and housing could only benefit from the regulation fostered by an incorporated municipality. Real estate values, as well, could only hope to benefit from an Act, and as an indication, it was once estimated that the increased access offered by just a sidewalk would boost property values by fifty per cent. This gives one a fair idea of the property enhancement which would occur as a result of drainage, sewers, graded streets, and public safety improvements wrought by a corporation. Indeed, once a fire department was started, the city would enjoy advantageous insurance rates.

A mass meeting held in the schoolhouse on the evening of 27 December 1872 ironed out the pros and cons of the movement. John H. McTavish, of the Hudson's Bay Company, attended the meeting, and although he did not speak on behalf of the Company, he personally believed that incorporation would be beneficial to the town. A committee consisting of eminent merchants was struck to draft an incorporation bill to be presented to the legislature at its spring 1873 sitting. Another motion was made to request Donald A. Smith, the local member of the legislature, to use his best efforts to see the bill through the House.

Throughout January 1873 a number of meetings were held to draft the legislation. In the end the bill was to be very similar to the Ontario municipal system, reflecting, perhaps, the Central Canadian origins of its framers and their admiration for the 'perfections' of its institutions. On 5 February 1873, the schoolhouse was again thrown open for an incorporation meeting — this time to unveil the proposed legislation. The tenets of the legislation supposedly pleased all present, except that the drafters had not provided for a ward system. This 'universal whole system' was supported mainly by F.E. Cornish and did not meet with much support. On the subject of a ward system, McTavish personally sided with the other local people in a desire for this representation. The following day, the legislation committee met to consider the ward division. Four wards, corresponding to the points of the compass were projected and appended to the draft. The Citizens' Bill was ready to go to the legislature, which was already in session.

Though seen as a sure thing for passage, the bill did not pass, and a bitter pill was swallowed by the Winnipeggers. Immediately, the Hudson's Bay Company and Donald A. Smith, MPP, were vilified in the press for killing the bill by an undue exertion of its terrible influence. The government printers, Caldwell and Cunningham, and *Le Métis,* were condemned for their slowness (had it been deliberate?) which finally forced Attorney-General Clarke to personally introduce the Incorporation Bill when there were a few printed copies around. The other large land-owners, Bannatyne, McDermot and others, were publically condemned at yet another emotion-charged mass meeting. The bill had been 'corrupted' by McTavish and others to become an Act to Incorporate the City of Selkirk; though it was forgotten that Clarke and John Sutherland had made losing motions to change Winnipeg to Assiniboia and Garry respectively. Especially perfidious as evidence against the Company was the reduction in the levy from 10 mills (one per cent) overall to 5 mills (1/2 of 1 per cent) on improved property and one-half mill (1/20 of 1 per cent) on the unimproved lands about the city. The case seemed clear-cut against the Hudson's Bay Company, so much so that the Speaker of the Legislature, C. J. Bird, was waylaid by ruffians, beaten and tarred at the north end of Main Road.



Manitoba Archives

John H. McTavish, a Company servant who favoured incorporation.

In the above fashion, the traditional accounts of the Company's defeat of Winnipeg incorporation have proceeded over the last century. Unfortunately, the Company was probably the area's most non-vocal exponent of the measure though it has been tarred and feathered as an obstructionist ever since. To state that the Hudson's Bay Company opposed the incorporation of Winnipeg is to ignore several salient facts.

The most significant is that the Company had the biggest stake in the matter of incorporation. The estab-

lishment of a civic hierarchy would have led to the provision of services and improvements; among them would be police and fire protection, drainage, sewerage, garbage disposal and street grading. Property values would be enhanced to a great degree by the provision of services. This, in terms of the Company's prosperity was paramount, for the Fort Garry Reserve was considered to be the most valuable part of the Company's property. As well, it was important to the Company's land sales that some sort of capital be fixed at Winnipeg. Though the Provincial Parliament sat at Winnipeg, its unincorporated status meant that its hold on this institution was rather shaky.

Furthermore, the Hudson's Bay Company did not consider taxation to be a problem, even with a ten-mill levy. The $5,900 land tax was more than compensated for in the early land sales. At their July 1872 auction, the Company had realized $41,550 for 36 lots, and two years later obtained in excess of $22,500 for fifty lots. With an ever-decreasing stock of property, the amount of taxes would also decrease, leaving more revenue from lots. Furthermore, when a tax dispute with the City of Winnipeg did boil over, the difficulties arose over the evaluation of 'stock in hand' and not realty taxes.

Indeed, according to an examination of Company records, there was no policy nor any directive against incorporation of Winnipeg. Only one mention was made of this local event, and that was relative to the actual incorporation passage in November 1873. Furthermore, it is known that McTavish was of a favourable disposition personally toward the measure. Smith, in an open letter to the press, stated that his position had been grossly misrepresented by the Winnipeggers. Thus, the Company and its representatives were silent supporters of Winnipeg's incorporated status.

If the Hudson's Bay Company did not see to the demise of the bill, one may well ask what did happen in March 1873? The answer lies partially in the precarious state of provincial finances. As revealed in 1875, the Citizens' Bill would have given the new City of Winnipeg a certain amount of provincial licence revenue. At the time, aside from a substantial Dominion Government subsidy ($168,000), the chief revenue of the province came from the issuance of licences ($12,800). The Legislative Assembly amended this clause so that all licence revenues went to the provincial treasury.

With this amendment, a crowd rushed to the legislative chamber that 'had an alarming resemblance to a mob'. There, they discovered the Assembly had gone home and found only the Legislative Council in session. This group was approached, showed sympathy for the Winnipeggers, and over-ruled the Assembly's amendments. Speaker James McKay 'said the people's interest would always be carefully considered by this House'. The next day, the council accepted the original bill, probably realizing that the assembly would 'finish it off' at their sitting. Indeed, the council's action was viewed as unconstitutional by Attorney-General Clarke. The Speaker, Dr Bird, concurred with Clarke on the council's bill and ruled it as such. From there, the matter died for the time.

With mob violence threatening the village, troops were called out to avoid a repetition of the disturbances of the previous autumn. In the charged atmosphere of March 1873, the framers of the Citizens' Bill would not admit their failure to comprehend the rejection of the bill over revenue. In order to explain the failure, the demise was blamed on a scapegoat — the traditional black sheep of the Ontario expansionists, the Honourable Company. The presence of troops ensured that violence would not be done to Company property or employees. The Company was probably guilty, anyway, of getting the taxation rate dropped on unimproved lands, and thus from the point of view of the poor Ontario mechanic with 'a small town lot and a shanty scantily furnished' the blackening of the Company name could hardly be unjustified.

Henry J. Clarke, Manitoba's Attorney-General in 1873, forced Winnipeg's Incorporation Act through the Legislature.

Manitoba Archives

F.E. Cornish, landowner and first Mayor of Winnipeg.

Manitoba Archives

To add insult to injury, the expansionist Toronto *Globe* picked up the matter from its 'own Correspondent' (probably W.F. Luxton of the *Free Press*) and used the Company's possession of the Reserve as a knock against the government of Sir John A. Macdonald. Here it became firmly 'established' that the Company wished to evade taxation. The *Manitoban* in either defending the Company or trying to set the matter straight, quoted the *Globe*'s attack and inadvertently lent the substance of the important *Globe* to the local

Portage la Prairie Road (Portage Avenue) looking east on the eve of incorporation, 1872.

taxation rumours. Thus, a partisan tirade some fifteen hundred miles away was transformed into the 'truth', since accepted by history.

The matter of Winnipeg's incorporation disappeared from the limelight until November 1873. In the meantime, Winnipeggers vented their jealousies regarding the Company obtaining the Dominion Government buildings and other facilities, such as Fort Osborne Barracks and the Government Reserve. The incorporation matter resurfaced at the fall sitting of the Legislature, the new bill being identical to the deposed March version. Curiously, the bill was rushed through the legislature and passed on 8 November without any difficulty. Any supposed Hudson's Bay Company opposition had melted away completely. The forces of progress had defeated the monopoly, and Winnipeg was a city.

Understanding the situation as it existed in March, the passage of the Winnipeg Incorporation Bill in November does not make any sense unless other forces had come into play. The bill had changed little from that of March.

> The only financial concession requested of the Government is the license money; but in return they assume the entire expenditure upon streets, drains, bridges, etc. within the incorporation limits, as well as the maintenance of the police, and other expenses attendant upon preserving law and order within the boundaries.

Within one day of its introduction, the Citizens' Bill was law, having had its three readings in a prompt fashion, the French members waiving their right to a reading in French. According to J. H. McTavish,

> Attorney-General Clarke secured the support of Mr. [E. H. G. G.] Hay and his friends by a promise of a revision of the Electoral Division which would cut off several French members and replace them by English.

Indeed, the electoral map was changed significantly by the new legislation. This redistribution would lead to some difficulties in 1874.

Armed with their Incorporation Act, the Winnipeggers wasted no time in setting up their organization. Factionalism came to the fore in the mayoralty contest with candidate Luxton accusing candidate Cornish of being in league with the Hudson's Bay Company, something incredible after all he had done against the Company. This rapid disintegration of the Winnipeggers as a unified front had been occurring since October, when W. Frank Lynn and Cornish had attempted to carry the incorporation movement their own way. The divided nature of the movement being thereby noted, the speculative community resumed its pattern of private interests. The chief difference after this time was, of course, the presence of a local legislative body that was amenable to the provision of services and improvements to lands.

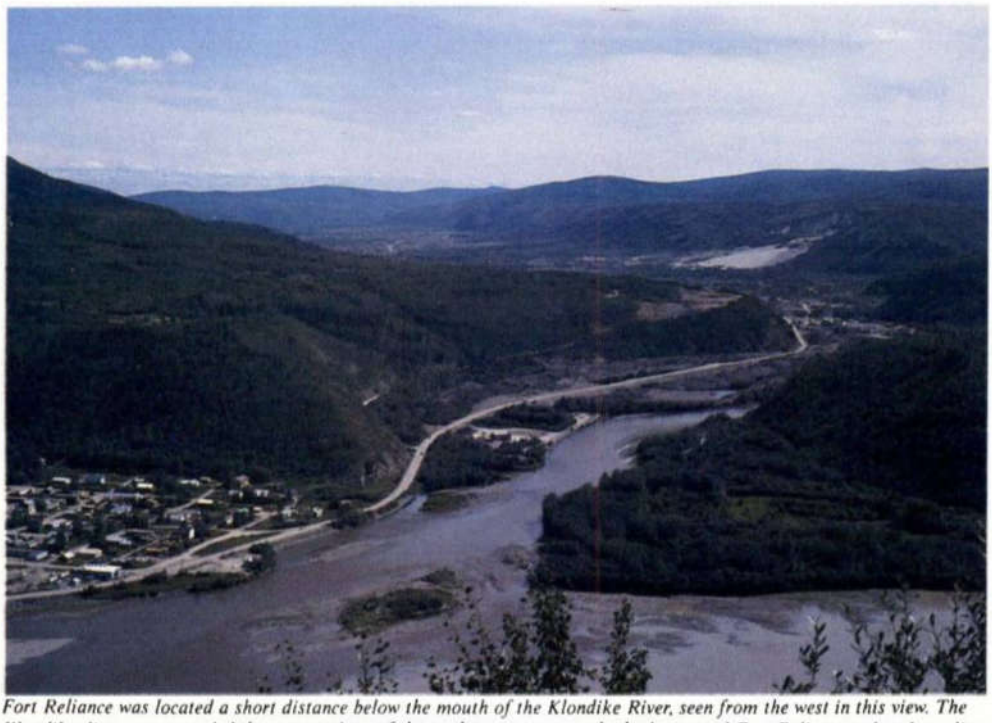
The Winnipeg Incorporation movement, though divided in nature at the end, marked the first concerted and unified effort of the townspeople to secure a situation advantageous to local land development. In the seventies, this movement would have an anti-climax in the attraction of the railway to Winnipeg against great odds. After that time, the land booms that had been mooted by the speculators occurred in the early eighties, offering some fruition for the manipulators of the previous decade. The City of Winnipeg therefore became a creation of the speculative interests, those whose holdings would either be enhanced by or protected by the corporation.

Though the Hudson's Bay Company with its Reserve represented the largest single land-owner in Winnipeg, its stake in the movement to incorporate the city has never been fully recognized, largely because of the excellent propaganda put out by the townspeople at the time. So successful was the campaign of the Winnipeggers that their version of the incorporation story has been accepted as fact for over a century. Had the Hudson's Bay Company been given the same chance as the Winnipeggers to make a contribution to the movement, it is possible that the act would not have required such severe reorganization in 1875. The act proved to be an abortion, as one writer called it, for the city was left without powers of enforcement for taxation and improvements. McTavish did serve on the framing committee, but there is no evidence that his 'intimate knowledge of the people of the Settlement and their requirements' was used in the make-up of the legislation. As it stood, the Company probably favoured the incorporation of Winnipeg from the viewpoint of improvements enhancing values, and, as Smith stated, the Company position had been grossly misrepresented by the people of Winnipeg.

This is not to say that the Company did not seek to get the taxation rate reduced for unimproved property. It is quite probable that the reduction from 10 mills to 5 mills and 1/2 mill may well have been the result of manipulations of the larger Winnipeg land-owners who were represented by Smith and McTavish. Like the rivalry to obtain governmental buildings and therefore attract the business district to their quarter, such attempts at a reduced levy could be seen as quite natural in terms of the monopoly capitalism of the period. Through these efforts, the Company influence upon events was seen as greater than it actually was at the time. Thus, the Hudson's Bay Company had assumed a passive role in the Winnipeg incorporation matter because of local vituperation generated by traditional Ontario hostility to the Company; it is quite evident that the Company viewed incorporation in a positive light. ♦

Archaeologists Investigate Fort Reliance

By Donald W. Clark

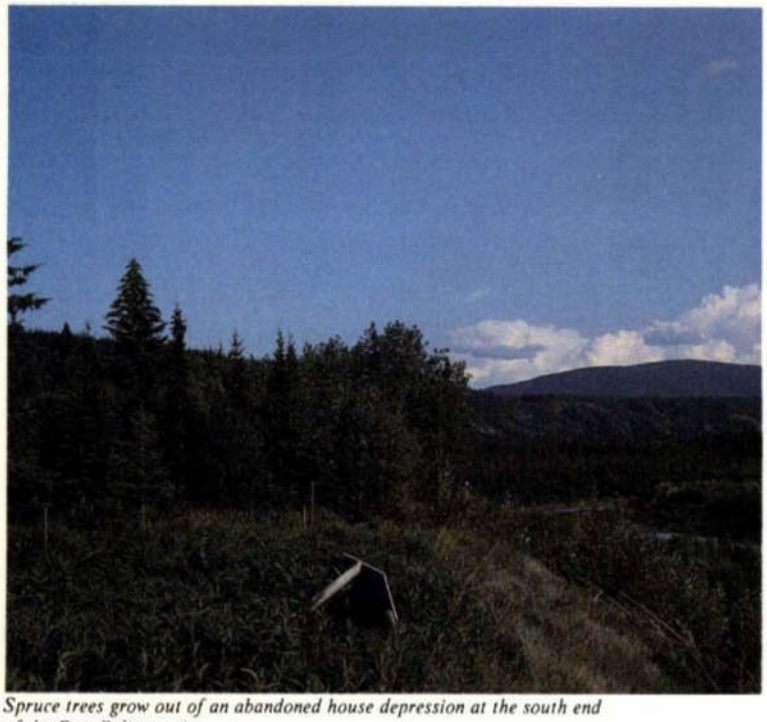


Fort Reliance was located a short distance below the mouth of the Klondike River, seen from the west in this view. The Klondike discovery exceeded the expectations of the trader-prospectors who had operated Fort Reliance a decade earlier.

AUGUST 1874: The anxiety of past weeks suddenly was lifted from François Mercier (d. Montreal Jan. 1906) when Catseh, chief of the Klondike Han, pointed to the well elevated wooded riverbank six miles below the mouth of the Klondike River. Here was an ideal location for his new trading post, Fort Reliance. The diminutive steamer *Yukon* was secured to the shore; the crew helped clear the site; then a few days later they cast off to return down river, leaving Leroy 'Jack' McQuesten — the 'Father of the Yukon', his assistant and the Indians to construct the buildings.

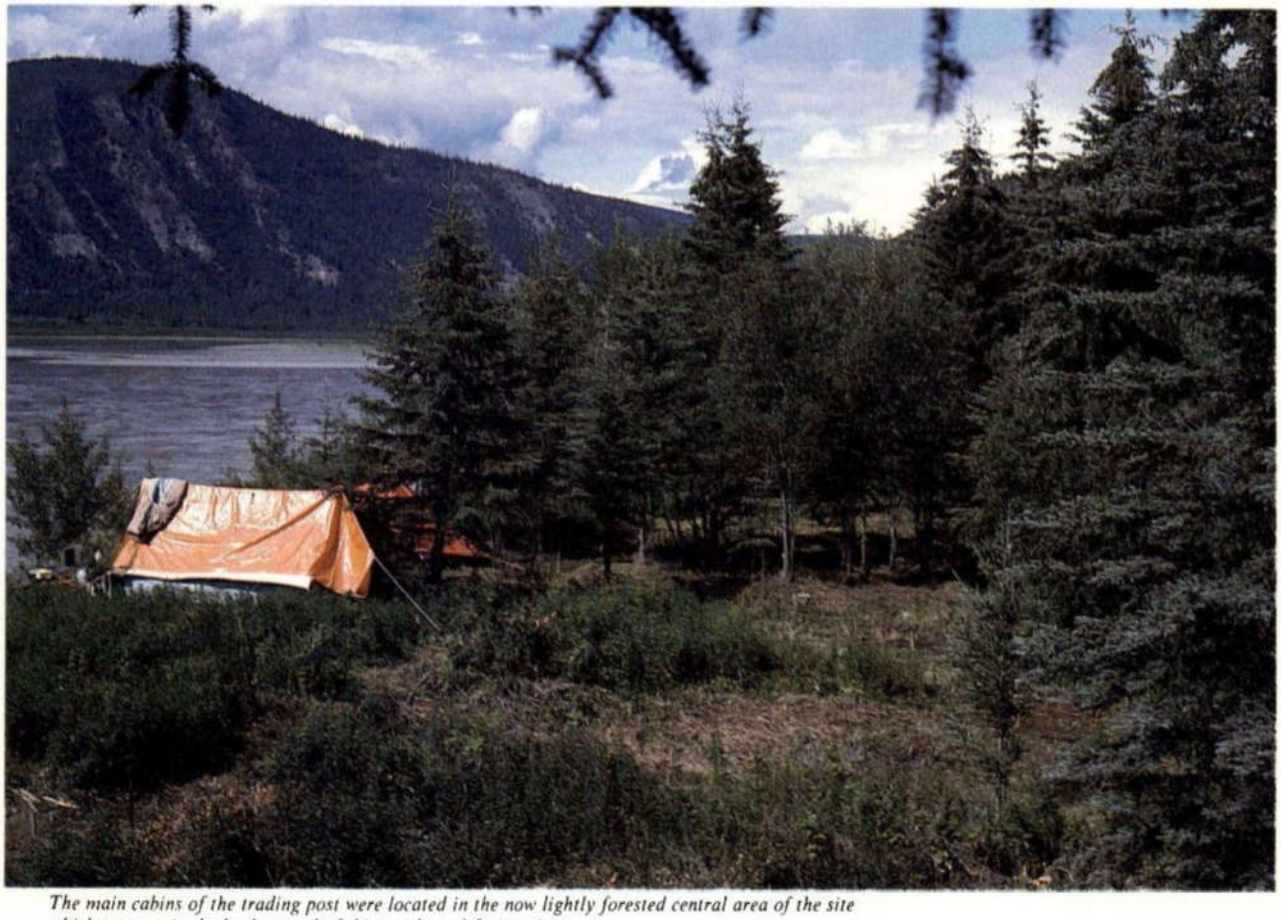
Underlying the founding of Fort Reliance is the intriguing story of the competition between the Russian American Company and Hudson's Bay Company for the fur trade of the Yukon Valley, both to be succeeded by the Alaska Commercial Company when the United States purchased Alaska in 1867. Two years later, the Alaskan company took over Fort Yukon, which was well within Alaska, while the H B C retired up the Porcupine River near the border of the northern Yukon. With that exception, the entire future Yukon Territory and part of eastern Alaska was without a trader. The Alaska Commercial Company moved to fill this void.

Dr Clark is Curator of Yukon Archaeology at the Archaeological Survey of Canada, a division of the National Museum of Man, Ottawa. His research at Fort Reliance has many tie-ins with that done on the Koyukuk River of Alaska, pertaining to both native inhabitants and the Alaska Commercial Company traders.



Spruce trees grow out of an abandoned house depression at the south end of the Fort Reliance site.

To the right of the abandoned house depression is the view looking toward Dawson which lies to the south, six and a half miles between the hills in the background.

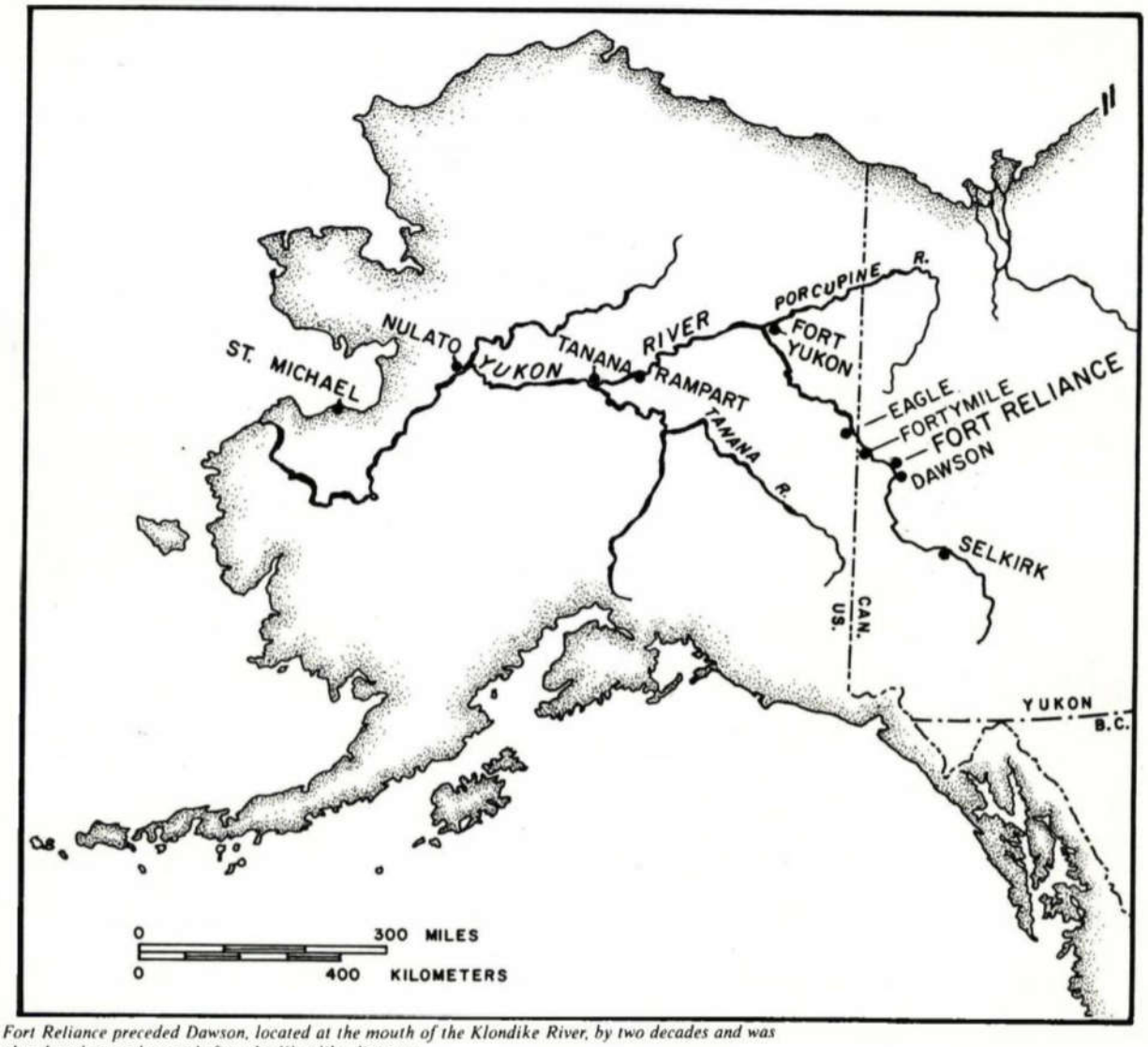


The main cabins of the trading post were located in the now lightly forested central area of the site which appears in the background of this northward-facing view.

House depression No. 1, viewed from an adjacent spruce tree, is a distinctive one-metre-deep pit.

Fort Reliance thus represents an intrusion of a United States trading firm, with its particular mode of operation and line of goods, into a region previously served by a British company. Too, the new company was the successor of a Russian one and many of its employees, including evidently the 'translator' at Fort Reliance, were of Russian-Native parentage. Also prominent among company employees and semi-independent traders were many who traced their patrimony directly or indirectly to Quebec and Ontario — the Mercier brothers, Joseph LaDue, Gordon Bettles and Arthur Harper among others. As if this operation in a land that hardly knew international boundaries in those days could be any more multinational, the clientele of Fort Reliance during its first years was neither British North American, French Canadian, Russian or American from the United States but was the local Athapaskan Indians, largely of the Han and Tanana groups.

For many winters the trader, sometimes with a prospector partner such as Harper or LaDue, was the only person of his race living in countless thousands of square miles of the Yukon. Then, beginning about 1882, increasing numbers of prospectors and miners started coming overland through the rugged passes from the coast of Alaska. At first Fort Reliance could not sustain the few prospectors who penetrated that far inland, so most left the country at the end of each summer; but in 1884 McQuesten began to change the focus of the post from trading furs to servicing the prospecting and mining industry. Miners started to build cabins and overwinter at Fort Reliance and in the vicinity. This gave them a base from which to search more intensively, in the Fortymile and other drainages. Placers on the Stewart River were becoming productive. To be closer to the mines, at the end of the spring 1886 trading season McQuesten, in partnership with Mayo



Fort Reliance preceded Dawson, located at the mouth of the Klondike River, by two decades and was abandoned several years before the Klondike discovery.

and Harper, moved to the mouth of the Stewart River. That was the end of operations at Fort Reliance, but prospecting 40 miles below the old post continued and finally paid off that winter with the Fortymile discovery — a major find in its own right but one to be eclipsed within a decade by the Klondike strike.

These were the years of the 'Prelude to Bonanza' (A. A. Wright's term for this period of Yukon history and the title of his book). If any fixed local base is to be assigned to this prelude, to the peregrinations of prospectors and miners prior to the Fortymile rush, it is Fort Reliance.

In the 1950s R. S. MacNeish, then of the National Museum, visited the site of Fort Reliance and reported flaked stone artifacts indicating early Indian occupation there, but he did not carry his investigation any further. Jeff Hunston, of Dawson and Whitehorse, also visited the site while he was doing archaeological excavations at nearby Moosehide and reported to me that traces of old buildings could be seen on the trading post site. The possibility that this site might have witnessed a continuity of occupation from the prehistoric past through early times as a Han settlement and then as a trading post offered an interesting research problem, especially as it often is difficult to trace the history of native peoples prior to the time of first European encounters. Moreover, as we have seen, the trading post was especially significant to the pre-Gold Rush history of the region. As a historic site, as a tangible

aspect of history, it could be of immense public value, especially considering that the majority of sites in Canada have been severely damaged by erosion, construction, cultivation or the consequences of continuing occupation.

One of the National Museum of Man field projects undertaken in 1983 by the writer, was to determine the condition of the Fort Reliance site, its potential for future research and development, and the relationship of the early Indian occupation to that by the traders. Even if the museum did not plan further work there this information would be invaluable to planners should the site ever become endangered by river erosion or vandalism or should any development, logging or construction, be planned for the area.

Examination of the surface in 1983 revealed five dwelling depressions, three of which had tunnel-like entrance passages, and the outlines or placings of seven cabins. The last are formed principally by ridges remaining of earth that had been used to bank lower cabin logs, none of which remain today. Later camping on the site probably about the time of the Klondike Rush, well after its general abandonment, resulted in an accumulation of old-type metal cans in one area and a few other remains elsewhere, but does not appear to have disturbed it to any great extent. No structures are being lost to present slow riverbank erosion and there is no evidence that any were lost during the past 97 years of general abandonment. However some artifacts and many refuse bones were collected along the riverbank, so the old dumps and part of the outside activity area seem to have been lost.

The floor of each structure was tested with a 1.3-metre or 1.0-metre-square test pit and one structure was bisected by a ¾-metre-wide slit trench. Clear areas and small pits outside the apparent houses were similarly tested. Altogether there were 33 test excavations.

The overall conclusion from this programme is that archaeological material (artifacts, food bones and other refuse) exists in all areas of the site, both within and outside structure floors.

Traces of late prehistoric native occupation, represented by stone artifacts such as scrapers and an arrow head, are present on at least three areas of the site.

Missing at present is evidence of indirect early nineteenth-century contact with Europeans and later, between 1847 and 1869, with H B C traders of the region, though I anticipate that further investigation of apparent prehistoric layers will turn up evidence of this early trade.

All five dwelling depressions at the south end of the site are Indian semi-subterranean winter houses, presumably built by the local Han Athapaskans. The deep house pits with entrance tunnels, which resemble Eskimo and Koyukon Indian house remains of northwestern Alaska, had not previously been reported for this group. They evidently are contemporary with the trading post, judging from the report of Lt Schwatka, who saw Fort Reliance in 1883 and from the fact that remnants of one-pound powder flasks were recovered from the floors. These powder cans probably first appeared in the region with the arrival of the U.S. traders downriver at Fort Yukon in 1869.

Cabin outlines are localized in the central and northern (down river) areas of the site. These are the remains of the trading post built in 1874, of cabins in which miners overwintered in 1885-86 and possibly also in 1882-83 (the exact location of the 1882-83 miners' cabins is open to interpretation). The largest structure, which was either the store or a combination store and dwelling, can be identified with one shown in a photograph taken by Reverend Simms in 1883 and in a sketch by Willis Everette, in the University of Alaska archives at Fairbanks, for 1884. However, smaller structures appear to have lacked floors and artifacts recovered from them can be attributed to Indian occupants.

The site is physically uncomplicated, but many details of its occupation by traders, Indians, miners and gold rushers remain to be resolved. Fort Reliance was occupied during a period when styles of trade beads were changing, and on the basis of these beads it is possible to divide the 12 structures into three temporal groups, all dating within a few years of one another. By this period, 1874-1886, the Indians of the region had become committed to the use of imported hardware and summer clothing, though housing, winter clothing, transportation and subsistence were still to a large degree according to traditional modes.

Accordingly, most of the artifacts (largely fragments) are those obtainable from a hardware store of the period: cut nails, window glass, clay pipes, many varieties of beads, sherds of painted, plain and transfer ceramics, milk-glass buttons, powder cans, shot, musket balls, 44 rim-fire cartridge cases, scissors and even part of a hard rubber comb. From the floors of the sunken native houses there also are a few traditional-type implements: bone awls, large tabular hide scraping stones, and flint flakes used for scrapers as well as cut scraps and items made from recycled metal containers. A small metal crucifix was found between two of these houses. Teacup handles and part of a kerosene lamp were found in a trash pit next to the store building. Three cupels (small disposable pallets used in fire assaying for hardrock gold) were discarded on the site by some optimistic prospector.

Though it was small and unimposing, its relative lack of disturbance, intrinsic importance to the history of the Yukon and delimited period of occupation make Fort Reliance one of the more important remains of its kind in the Yukon Territory and northwestern Canada. ♦

Northern Pilgrimage

By Robert Jarvenpa

Fisher of men: Father Louis Moraud and Chipewyan friends portaging rapids on the Churchill River.

Northern Saskatchewan natives and their neighbours gather annually to honour the memory of their former priest, Father Louis Moraud. Prayer and recreation draw the scattered communities together near Father Moraud's burial place. Robert Jarvenpa, an associate professor of anthropology at the State University of New York, Albany, has participated in the 'Patuanak Pilgrimage' on four occasions.

I AWOKE TO FIND yesterday's peaceful village transformed. Hundreds of visitors from distant places, speaking several different languages, were streaming in. Scores of tents suddenly sprang up like so many mushrooms in a spring rain. Cries of recognition burst forth as old friends clasped each other. Crowds of strangers and acquaintances alike mingled in a carnival atmosphere. As I emerged from my bedroll for a closer look, I had to remind myself that this was not an Oriental bazaar or a medieval fair. Rather, I was amidst a compelling religious pilgrimage hosted annually by a small community of Indians in northwestern Saskatchewan.

The Chipewyan Indian community of Patuanak, Saskatchewan is the scene of the pilgrimage drama. Also known as *Dene*, these Athapaskan-speaking people occupy the Upper Churchill River drainage, an important historical contact zone emerging with the growth of the European and Euro-Canadian market economy in the late eighteenth century. Early fur company posts in the area served as seasonal gathering stations for hunting bands of both Chipewyan Indians and the Algonkian-speaking Western Woods Cree.

A new bridge to European society appeared in the mid-nineteenth century with the arrival of the French Roman Catholic order of Oblates of Mary Immaculate who established a mission at the fur-trade center of Ile-à-la-Crosse. By the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries both the fur companies and the church were decentralizing their operations. The dominant Hudson's Bay Company parent post at Ile-à-la-Crosse spawned a network of daughter outposts that operated on a winter schedule, and the Catholic mission began ministering to groups of Chipewyan, Cree and Métis in specific locales creating a network of small churches equipped with itinerant priests. One such locale is the village of Patuanak. Along with other small communities occupied by the English River Band of Chipewyan, Patuanak received the forceful attention of the Oblate missionary Father Louis Moraud. Indeed, much of his career between 1916 and 1965 was spent working and living among these Chipewyan.

During his lifetime Moraud was widely admired by fellow clergy and his congregation for his single-minded

Colourful boats line the shore during Patuanak days of prayer.

devotion to ecclesiastical work and for his ascetic lifestyle. On the other hand, his vigilant suppression of native magico-religious practices, coupled with a vigorous monitoring of Christian vices such as gambling and drinking, frustrated and embittered some parishioners. In recent years these negative feelings have been largely overshadowed by reverential feelings and the development of a lore that romanticizes the priest's life of hardships, mishaps and alleged 'miraculous' supernatural powers.

Local Chipewyan were touched by Moraud's desire to be buried on Patuanak church property near their remote reserve. After his death on 29 July 1965 the priest's grave became something of a shrine, its physical presence symbolizing the man's continuing relationship with the community. The people began observing the anniversary of Moraud's death, but what had been ostensibly a simple commemoration quickly evolved, by the mid-1970s, into a rather complex ceremonial occasion known colloquially as the 'Patuanak pilgrimage' or the 'feast for Father Moraud'. My own involvement with the Patuanak Chipewyan began in 1971 with a long-term field study of hunting ecology, socioeconomic change and interethnic relations. By 1980 I had been privileged to observe and participate in the pilgrimage proceedings on four separate occasions.

At present Patuanak contains about 600 Chipewyan residents, and nearly three-quarters of these have Treaty status as part of the federally incorporated English River Band. The white population includes about a dozen people forming a 'service-oriented' class associated with the Hudson's Bay Company store, a government-supported school, and the Catholic church. Although road access to the settlement was provided in the late 1970s, Patuanak remains geographically isolated. An embryonic uranium mining industry in northern Saskatchewan is beginning to change the complexion of labor, consumer habits and general social life in the area. Yet, the economy and subsistence system of the Patuanak Chipewyan are still heavily focused on commercial trapping and fishing and the seasonally nomadic movements of male work teams.

The Patuanak pilgrimage, in fact, is one among many annual festivals which have emerged in Upper Churchill communities and serve to integrate people from an extensive region. The bulk of these occur during the summer months when economic activity is at low ebb, and at that time Indian families find themselves in a state of perpetual travel by skiff, bush plane and truck

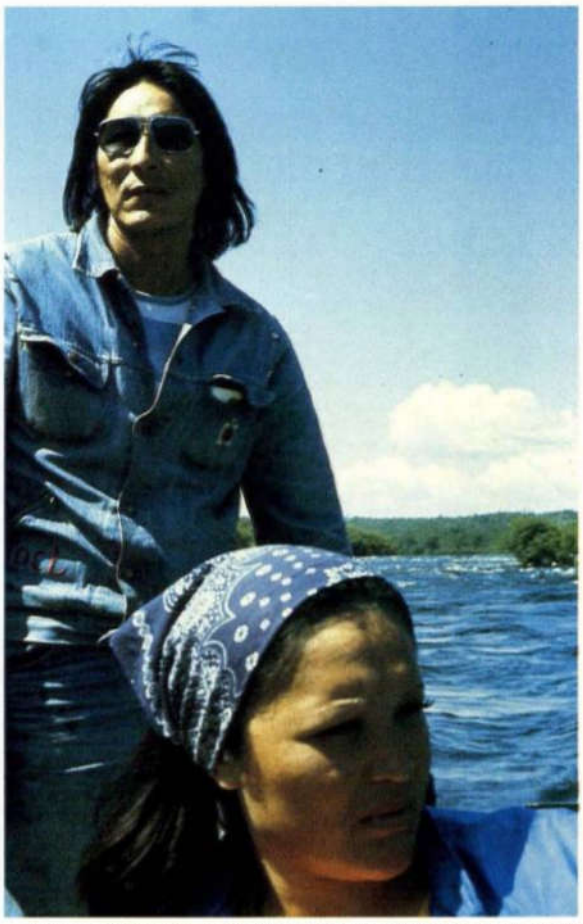
to various recreational festivals and religious pilgrimages. The following sequence is a typical annual cycle of festivals attended by many Patuanak Chipewyan and neighboring Cree:

> I. Buffalo Narrows Winter Carnival or Trappers' Festival (early March), II. Beauval Sport Day or Summer Festival (mid-June), III. Meadow Lake Stampede (early July), IV. Ile-à-la-Crosse Sport Day (mid-July), V. Lac Saint Anne Pilgrimage (late July) and VI. Patuanak Pilgrimage (late July)

By the third week of July Patuanak residents are well primed for the pilgrimage experience since many of them participate in an annual trek to Lac Saint Anne in the neighboring province of Alberta, the site of a Roman Catholic mission since the late 1850s. For many decades it has been the locus of alleged healing miracles, and the summer pilgrimage there draws thousands of people from a large catchment area including much of Alberta and Saskatchewan but also extending to the Northwest Territories, Manitoba, Minnesota and beyond. In some years as much as 20 per cent of the Patuanak population has travelled to Lac Saint Anne. Typically, these are middle-aged and elderly Chipewyan who are becoming disillusioned about the decline in 'miracles' and an increasing secularization and tawdriness in behaviour:

> There's no miracles there anymore, you know. Not like before. Long ago people were cured. Just walk in the lake, and they're cured like that. That's why they got all those crutches hanging up there. But now, nothing. There's too many people there. Too much noise and drinking. They don't respect it, that's why. It's just like another sport day. They don't respect it, that's why there's no miracles.

By contrast, the relative novelty, isolation and small scale of the Patuanak pilgrimage makes it particularly attractive to its adherents. Although the climax of this event generally falls on 29 July, the pilgrimage proceedings begin three to five days earlier with the return of local residents from Lac Saint Anne and the arrival of visiting pilgrims from native communities throughout northern Saskatchewan. Most prominent are other Chipewyan from nearby communities such as Dillon who travel by skiff and, in recent years, by truck. Chipewyan from more distant settlements, such as Portage La Loche, Turnor Lake, Black Lake and Wollaston Lake, are also heavily represented, and these people journey by chartered bush planes. In addition, there is a sizeable contingent of Cree and Métis Cree pilgrims travelling by skiff and truck from nearby Churchill River communities like Ile-à-la-Crosse, Buffalo Narrows and Pinehouse Lake.



A young Chipewyan couple, Noel and Celina McIntyre, navigate the waters of the Churchill on their way to Patuanak. Pilgrims still prefer traditional means of getting to and from the festival, although many must fly or come by road.

The arrival process itself is an important, albeit informal, part of pilgrimage drama. The bustle of converging bush planes, skiffs and pickup trucks creates an air of excitement and tension, and Patuanak residents greet relatives and friends they have not seen in years or, in some instances, decades. A sense of spectacle emerges as the waterfront and centre of the settlement are inundated with vehicles. Some visitors are given lodging in the houses of local acquaintances, but most pilgrims are equipped with tents, bedrolls and cooking supplies. A sprawling tent village soon encircles the church grounds and adjacent areas of the Patuanak reserve, easily doubling the local population.

Prior to the culminating day of the pilgrimage there is little sense of urgency or formality. Individuals and family groups sporadically walk to the church grounds where they pray for Father Moraud's guidance and assistance at his grave, and occasionally groups of elderly pilgrims meet at the grave site for evening prayer and hymn sessions. The bulk of each day, however, is spent in rather restrained but pervasive

socializing. Middle-aged and elderly pilgrims seek each other out in the shaded sides of houses and tents to relive past experiences and to share the news and gossip of recent times. Where such groups are culturally mixed, conversation tends to be conducted in Cree, historically a *lingua franca* between Indian groups in this area. Young adults and adolescents spend considerable time strolling about the village in a perpetual promenade that permits them to see and be seen by others. Less active pilgrims cluster at convenient vantage points around the church and the Hudson's Bay Company store and simply watch the flow of humanity in this passeggiata.

The crowding near the store is not purely recreational, however. While some pilgrims carry their own foodstuffs or enjoy the hospitality of meals with relatives, many others must purchase groceries during their stay in Patuanak. The Hudson's Bay Company management stocks extra reserves for the pilgrimage period, but invariably the small store's supplies are insufficient. By the second or third day throngs of customers have exhausted locally available fresh meat, bread and other staples. Spillover business finds its way quickly to two native-owned enterprises, a confectionery and a general store-garage.

A few Patuanak Chipewyan with an entrepreneurial bent have attempted to capitalize on the population influx with food concessions: picnic-style lunches on a back stoop, a makeshift hamburger stand, soda sold from the back of a pickup truck, and the like. These are ephemeral efforts which do not constitute a bazaar or well-organized arena of native exchange. Indeed, the most conspicuous and well-managed pilgrimage concession is a booth on church grounds selling Catholic religious paraphernalia. This stand does a brisk business in medallions, pendants, buttons, necklaces, bracelets and framed photographs of the Pope, while catalogue mail orders are taken for more exotic wares.

There is an element of generational conflict regarding the kinds of social activity appropriate during pilgrimage time. Patuanak elders have a reputation for strictness regarding alcohol use, at least in official contexts, and this takes on the character of a general proscription on drinking during the days of the pilgrimage. Drinking still occurs, however, particularly among parties of young men, but it is highly covert.

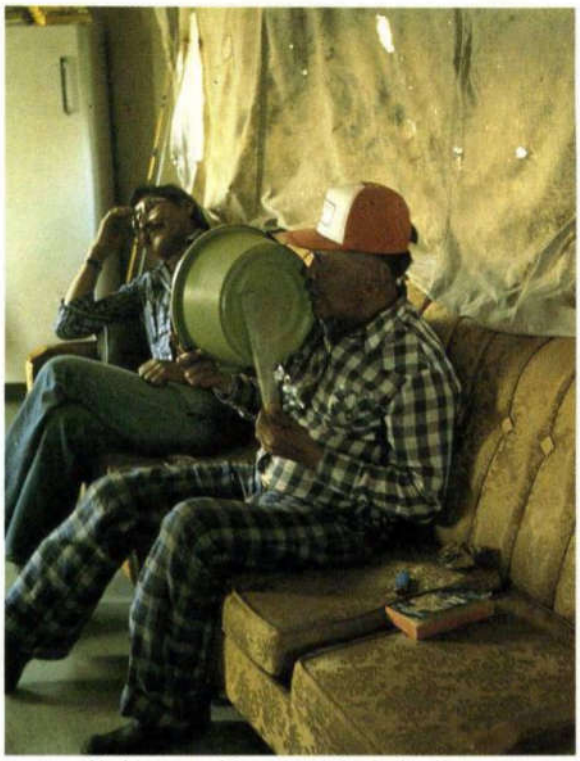
Other ceremonies are occasionally integrated into the pilgrimage proceedings. Here, two couples are married during the final day's mass.

Some adolescents and young adults attempt to organize evening dances as a way of heightening the festive atmosphere in Patuanak, but these plans are invariably thwarted by elders and band officials who often receive support from the clergy. Recalling their own personal experiences with Father Moraud and his restraints on behavioural excess, Chipewyan elders want to promote an air of somberness in keeping with these memories: 'Pilgrimage is for praying. Not right to pray and dance on same day!' Ironically, there is no attempt to abstain from one of the esteemed pastimes of the middle-aged and elderly, bingo. Boisterous sessions of bingo attract hundreds of pilgrims during evening hours, and even the priests comment tolerantly about having to compete with 'high bingo'.

It is worth noting that the Patuanak pilgrimage, like the Upper Churchill recreational festivals, is a form of mass social contact and exchange between Chipewyan and Cree. These mass visitations are significant because they occur during periods of publicly sanctioned good will and, thereby, provide a likely context within which specific kinds of Chipewyan-Cree cooperative relations function. This is the case regarding magico-medicinal curing services. The Patuanak pilgrimage has become a recognized stopping place in the circuit of at least one Cree 'medicine man' (*manitukasiu* in Cree), and the Chipewyan eagerly await his arrival. They openly express what they feel is Cree superiority in magical and medicinal knowledge, and a beneficial patron-client system has developed with Cree curers receiving payment from Chipewyan patients for treatment of illness.

Despite the Catholic clergy's generally censorious attitude toward native religion, they tolerate the institution of medicine men, curers and diviners. In part, this may be because the Indians themselves do not view 'Cree medicine' or 'old Indian medicine', as it is sometimes called, as something mutually exclusive of other kinds of health care. They readily avail themselves of western medicine, surgery and medical facilities and, of course, make annual pilgrimages to the sites of alleged healing miracles. Moreover, the church's reputation is usually enhanced by the modality of the miraculous. During one Patuanak pilgrimage a blind elderly Chipewyan woman from Wollaston Lake allegedly had her sight restored after assembled pilgrims prayed and sang in her behalf for a full day at the Moraud grave site. Emotionally moved pilgrims quickly spread the news: 'It's a miracle! It's a miracle!', confirming the efficacy and sanctity of Father Moraud, Moraud's grave, the church property and the pilgrimage in general.

The Catholic clergy are present throughout the pilgrimage, but they maintain a relatively low profile for the first few days conducting rosaries and evening masses in the church. They become more visible on the final and climactic day, 29 July, when a large outdoor mass conducted at Father Moraud's grave site becomes the focal point and culmination of the event. On this important day, the local resident priest who normally services Patuanak will be assisted by other priests from the region and the bishop of the district, centered in The Pas, Manitoba. Indeed, the bishop adopts a somewhat proprietary attitude toward the proceedings, perhaps understanding and hoping to foster the kind of intense relationship that wedded Moraud and his followers.



Alfred Montgrand from Cree Lake, Saskatchewan, entertains Patuanak man Norbert George with some drumming and singing.

At a recent pilgrimage I felt particularly moved by the events of the final day. On that day the bustle of the promenade ceased, and by noon many of the pilgrims had gathered on the church grounds where they talked quietly in small groups. A long queue formed outside the nearby priests' house to present confessions prior to receiving communion at the mass. While most pilgrims wore everyday work clothes, some arrived for the final mass in formal attire reserved for such occasions: beaded moosehide jackets and vests, siwash sweaters, old wool suits or cotton print dresses. Ushers and their assistants began hauling pews outside the church near the rear of the building where a large log canopy covers Father Moraud's grave. A few pews were placed under the canopy to accommodate an organist, a small group of Chipewyan hymn singers,

elderly and enfeebled pilgrims, and the clergy. Remaining pews were placed outside the canopy, but most pilgrims sat on the ground in a large semi-circle oriented toward the grave. A crowd of 500 to 800 people had assembled by 2:30 P.M., a sight which was visually dramatic for people accustomed to living in small encampments and villages for most of the year. The atmosphere was solemn but latent with expectation.

At that point the bishop, assisted by two priests, initiated the mass with an opening prayer and announcements, delivered in Chipewyan, Cree and English. An opening hymn followed, sung in Chipewyan and enthusiastically led by the elders of the Patuanak church. Hymn singing is, perhaps, the most pleasurable aspect of church and pilgrimage life for many Chipewyan and Cree alike. The often repeated refrain, 'Ave, Ave, Ave Maria!', had a euphoric effect on the large crowd. Following in quick succession were two sets of scripture readings, one offered by a priest and the other by a local resident, and these were punctuated by hymns.

The drama of the mass was heightened with the delivery of the bishop's sermon, crystallizing the meaning of the moment with analogies about memorialism:

> We go to the grave of the Unknown Soldier because the brave fighting men gave their lives in the war so we can be free. People gather at the grave of President John F. Kennedy because he was a great leader, and he stood for peace and dignity. And today we gather at the grave of Father Moraud because he stands for God and he stood for you! His life he gave for you. When he was alive all of his thoughts were of you, his people. At night he dreamed of you because that's how much he loved you. . . . Because you are a creation of God. This is a miracle. You are a miracle! . . . So you must believe in miracles, and you are here today to give praise to the miracle of Father Moraud's love for you and God's love for you.

In another sermon a priest underscored universal themes about sacrifice and the pilgrimage experience:

> Getting together this way is good and beautiful! Throughout history pilgrimages have been important in Christian life, and it's good because it gives us a feeling of brotherhood and a new awareness of God and Jesus Christ. And travelling a long way to come here is a good thing too. It would not be a real pilgrimage if we did not feel tired and hungry, eh? If it was something easy to do, it would not be a real pilgrimage.

After these messages were delivered in the three local languages, additional prayers and hymns followed, interrupted momentarily by the collection of offerings. Four ushers, prominent Chipewyan men in the Patuanak church, distributed the collection baskets. These men also served as general crowd control specialists throughout the mass, directing pilgrims to appropriate seats, rounding up stray dogs, and subduing boisterous children. In fact, the same individuals assisted the bishop and his staff in the final ritual of the mass, the receiving of communion. Under ordinary circumstances the people here are eager to receive the sacrament, but hundreds of anxious pilgrims created logistical problems. To accommodate this communion rush, several parallel queues were arranged before a phalanx of priests who simultaneously administered the sacramental wafers.

In a sense, the conclusion of the mass was only a prelude to the most profound moment of the pilgrimage. The climax arrived as people crowded into the back of the log canopy to be near Father Moraud. His grave is an unprepossessing site marked by a tubular steel railing and surrounded by glistening white sand hauled from a nearby beach. However, the focus of attention was a large commemorative plaque replete with a bas-relief likeness of Father Moraud. Although pilgrims had visited the shrine every day, this last visit was filled with emotional intensity. Normal reserve and reticence were dropped as people approached the figure of Moraud laying their hands upon the bronzed hands of the plaque. In this manner each pilgrim leaned against Father Moraud's image and, with eyes closed tightly in concentration, whispered a quick prayer. Some achieved an ecstatic state by this tangible grasping of Moraud's essence or power. The transmission was completed in a few seconds, and each person crossed himself before relinquishing the spot to others.

The final encounter with Father Moraud signalled the end of the pilgrimage for many people. Others continued to crowd about the grave site to observe the devotions of fellow pilgrims. Yet others focused their attention on a portable feature of the grave-shrine, a small table displaying some of Moraud's personal effects: eyeglasses, hymn book and Bible. These relics were gently touched and held. Another significant feature of the grave site, and perhaps sanctified by sheer context, were two large washtubs filled with blessed water. An assortment of canning jars, plastic bottles, thermos jugs and other vessels were filled by pilgrims who later used the water in their homes for healing and good fortune.

As people departed the grave site the pilgrimage was effectively at an end. The pilgrims felt renewed, and their exodus from Patuanak was rapid and dramatic. Tents were quickly collapsed, and the community was enveloped in dust and clamour as trucks, skiffs and bush planes simultaneously moved out. The feast for Father Moraud was over for another year. ♦

THE CANADIAN PRAIRIES
A History

By Gerald Friesen. University of Toronto Press, Toronto, 1984. 524 pp., illus. $24.95.

Reviewed by Frits Pannekoek

The University of Manitoba has nurtured more notable prairie historians than any other Western Canadian university: Chester Martin, A.R.M. Lower and of course W.L. Morton. Each produced chapters of the prairie past that were as much statements of their own strong convictions about their current world as they were compelling tales about settlement, Lord Selkirk, or the Province of Manitoba. Gerald Friesen's *The Canadian Prairies,* in that tradition, is reflective both of his world view, and the current state of both Western Canadian and Canadian scholarship. The end result is not, however, a new synthesis like W.L. Morton offered in his *Manitoba: A History.* Friesen instead attempts to knit together the interpretations and research of his fellow scholars.

If Friesen has an interpretation, it is of the left. His attempt to periodize prairie history reflects this. Sixteen forty to 1840 are the years which saw native and European cooperate peacefully. Eighteen forty to 1890 is defined as the period in which the market economy and European industrialist capitalist society restructured the region. From the 1890s to 1940s the prairie 'agricultural economy' and democratic capitalist state are both challenged and fixed. The 1940s see the creation of a regional distinctiveness and an economy in which the Prairie West is a 'neighbourhood in a multinational economy'.

While there is an attempt to carry these themes throughout the volume, the incredible variety of interpretations presented by historians in the last ten years are not entirely integrated or synthesized. Often Friesen does not seem to know what to make of them. This is particularly evident in the fur-trade chapters. The differences amongst Spry, Brown, Van Kirk, Goldring, and Foster over the nature of the mixed-blood or the fur-trade labour force are not always reconcilable. In some instances Friesen would have been better not to side with one view or the other, because the acceptance of any one view should logically have implications for all mixed-blood history. The acceptance of, for example, Jennifer Brown's views that there were two distinct fur-trade cultures, North West Company and Hudson's Bay Company, should have had an impact on Friesen's interpretation of the Riel Resistance. At least the idea that that event was somehow exacerbated by the continuing presence of the two traditions would have been worthy of further exploration.

Friesen's reluctance or inability to extend any one thesis beyond its immediate subject, has made him a prisoner of today's generation of scholars. The large number of small intensive studies of the last decade are with few exceptions concerned with minor problems rather than larger regional ones. It is curious that as the world impact on the prairie region grows (or so Friesen argues) so does the historian's concentration on ever smaller problems and issues. Since precious few historical generalizations exist about the prairies, and since its historians are largely products of a society and culture molded by multinational capitalism, the new historical observations are not so much reflective of a Canadian (as distinct from American) prairie perspective as a reflection of issues generally current to historians who are themselves products of international and multinationalist capitalist society. A further parallel observation would be that the historians of the Canadian prairies also do not strive as much to determine historical patterns from the prairie experience within the Canadian nation, as to provide evidence for sociological or urban theory expounded in American universities. The West becomes another area where good documentation exists to study problems common to urbanized and industrial society. The problem, not the prairies, becomes the central concern. Much of the work of the urban historians, fur-trade 'sociologists', and those concerned with the cooperative movement could be argued to fall into this category.

Friesen, who is concerned with the prairie historical experience as an end, has been unable to mesh his observations on the prairie past made evident in his periodization with those of the several dozen historians-sociologists he attempts to synthesize. The volume as a result is half-narrative and half-historiographical. To the non-academic it will be confusing, and to the academic less than fully satisfying because in the space allocated to each problem the historiographical criticisms must be superficial. This historiographical emphasis will mean that the volume will date itself quickly. Rather than a timeless

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reflection of the prairie experience achieved by scholars like W.L. Morton, the book will become a reflection of the scholarship of the 1970s and early 1980s.

It would be possible to argue and debate each of Friesen's points — such is the historian's craft today. On the pre-1870 West one major point immediately comes to mind. Friesen tends to compartmentalize the Indian and European experiences. This separation was in reality superficial. The Indian and European worlds were not separate — they were part of an organic whole and should be studied as such. At York Factory the Europeans had extensive and extended Indian families and saw themselves as part of the Indian world. The Indians for their part did not see their European relatives as living in another bayside world.

It would be wrong to deny that Friesen's volume is an excellent reflection of the renaissance in prairie historical writing. His bibliographic essay provides a brief indication of the volume of work that has been done in the last decades. What is also obvious is that not all of this work is being done at the prairie universities. Parks Canada, Prairie region has made an obvious impact with the work of Sarah Carter, Walter Hildebrandt, Lyle Dick, Ian Clarke and Diane Payment. They have researched such esoteric areas as prairie material culture and landscape history, as well as the more worn subjects of Metis and settlement history. What is also obvious is Friesen's link with the present-day province of Manitoba, which sometimes seems, perhaps rightfully, to dominate the tale he weaves.

In spite of these observations, which are observations rather than criticisms, Friesen without doubt accomplished a remarkable synthesis with such skill that the book will find its way to all Western Canadian history survey courses. If the general public were going to read but one book on the prairie past this should be it.

Dr Pannekoek is Director of the Historic Sites Service, Alberta Culture.

A Toast to the Fur Trade

A Picture Essay on Its Material Culture

By Robert C. Wheeler

Illustrations by David Christofferson

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A GENTLEMAN ADVENTURER — The Arctic Diaries of Richard Bonnycastle

Compiled and edited by Heather Robertson. Lester & Orpen Dennys, Toronto, 1984. 218 pp., illus. $24.95.

Reviewed by Shirlee Anne Smith

This handsomely produced book includes four diaries (June-October 1928, October 1928-March 1929, June 1929-July 1930 and March-October 1931) of trips on the Mackenzie River and the Western Arctic coastline, which the editor has 'shortened, trimmed of repetition and redundancy, and edited for clarity and coherence.' Although titled 'Arctic Diaries' the book also contains long extracts from Hudson's Bay Company post journals, *The Beaver,* government reports and related books, interwoven with editorial comment.

Introductions to books generally expand and clarify the main body of text. It is unfortunate that this one, numbering 15 pages, is inadequate. It suffers from exaggerated statements and omissions. Those knowledgeable of Hudson's Bay Company history will be surprised, and perhaps amused, to read that 'the governor in London ruled with the power and the terror of a Sun King; the humble post manager was little more than a slave'. Of the 31 governors, based in London for 300 years, it would be difficult to find one who fitted that description; and time and distance, in fact, made a slave-Sun King relationship impossible. Surely, the editor's contention

on page 104 that the Hudson's Bay Company 'had been doing things the same way since 1670' is absurd.

Presumably, in the interests of 'colourful copy' (the event took place in 1922 not 1926, before Bonnycastle joined the Company), the editor quotes from Jean Godsell's book, *I Was No Lady*, the physical details of her fist fight with the wife of a Royal Canadian Mounted Police corporal at Fort Fitzgerald. Most readers will have to speculate why the wife of a Hudson's Bay Company Inspector would have behaved in such an irrational manner, although the information is given in Godsell's book.

The diaries are refreshing, candid and informative and will appeal to a wide readership. When Bonnycastle joined the Company as an accountant in 1925, at age 22, there were no standardized personnel and accounting procedures, specially designed arctic buildings, nutritionally tested mess supplies, and few airplanes. Like other new recruits before him, Bonnycastle quickly noted the problems facing the neglected fur-trade department: no continuity of policy, tremendous overhead, lack of organization, and no consideration for the future or the past. He also knew that improved requisitions, transport, hiring policies, and government negotiations would aid the ailing department. Bonnycastle made a good start, but total revitalization was not possible until after World War II.

The diaries will have a special interest for students of social history, as they contain the kind of detail which rarely appears in official reports. When leaving Fort Good Hope in November 1928 on his first dog-team trip, Bonnycastle writes: 'We have 60 meatballs, 70 slices of bacon, beans cooked and frozen, bannocks and doughnuts.' One marvels at his stamina and patience as he covers 60 miles by dog-team in one day, running 30 of them; sleeping in the open, or in a warehouse loft on two caribou skins, his feet bleeding from wearing snowshoes; and conducting his office work on two planks nailed together and propped up by a drawer.

What remains with one after reading this book is not the excitement of the Lindberghs flying over Aklavik in 1931, the wreck of the *Baychimo* in the same year, and all the other high and low points, but the man himself. Bonnycastle, who left the Hudson's Bay Company in 1943 to become a successful and respected business executive, was the personification of a certain type of Canadian. He was diplomatic, fair in his treatment of everyone and inured to hardship. We are richer because he chose to live and work among us.

It is not true that Canadians have no heroes; what is now needed is a full length biography of this remarkable man.

Shirlee Anne Smith is Keeper, Hudson's Bay Company Archives, Provincial Archives of Manitoba.

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PRAIRIE FIRE
The 1885 North-West Rebellion

By Bob Beal and Rod Macleod. Hurtig Publishers, Edmonton, 1984. 384 pp., illus. $19.95.

Reviewed by Hartwell Bowsfield

As predictable as prairie protest was the appearance of publications commemorating the centenary of the North-West Rebellion of 1885. *Prairie Fire* is clearly one of the major items in the development of a mini-book-boom celebrating that event. Represented not only as 'the first comprehensive history of the rebellion' but also as 'the definitive book' on the rebellion, *Prairie Fire* will be a disappointment and a frustration to those who had hoped for an attempt at some synthesis or interpretation of the rebellion based on the extensive and increasing literature on Louis Riel and the events of the 1880s in the Northwest. *Prairie Fire* falls short of being the 'definitive' study ('definitive' being defined as that which serves to supply a final and decisive evaluation) because the authors consider 'definitive' as meaning a compilation of detail.

One of the justifications of the study (other than as a centenary event) is that no 'full scale' history of the rebellion had been undertaken since Desmond Morton's *The Last War Drum* in 1972. Morton's volume, however, did not presume to be a history of the rebellion but was, for the most part, focused on its military aspects. It is claimed, also, that many 'important documents' bearing on the events have surfaced since 1972. This may be true though the significance of such documents appears to be limited because they merely add details to the traditional narrative. In line with the current trend in the history of the West, the role of the Indians (their grievances in the 1880s; their conduct during the rebellion, their trials following the rebellion) receives an enhanced treatment, though it is surely unnecessary (considering George Stanley's *Birth of Western Canada*) to warn readers that it is a misconception to think of the rebellion as a Métis affair only.

When *Prairie Fire* does attempt analysis or interpretation the result is disquietening. 'The rebellion', it is said, 'produced no dramatic changes in Western Canada'; 'The most significant long-term results of the rebellion occurred not in the Northwest but in the Province of Quebec'. To the execution of Riel is attributed Quebec's shift from the Conservative to the Liberal party in the federal election of 1896. This statement epitomizes the authors' attempt (perhaps consciously) to avoid the complexities and implications of the events of 1885 (for both Eastern and Western Canada), and to ignore earlier research in the

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field. In the case of the federal election of 1896 the question must be raised — why did it take eleven years for the province of Quebec to turn to the Liberal party? The question was raised in 1956 by professors John Saywell and Blair Neatby who conclude that the Liberal victory of 1896 in Quebec had more to do with the provincial political situation than with a reaction to the 1885 affair. The Conservative party had been losing ground in Quebec since the federal election of 1882; by 1896, the Quebec wing of the party was divided and leaderless.

In characteristic western fashion the 'causes' of the rebellion, as outlined in *Prairie Fire*, resulted from the federal government's neglect, from private corruption, from favouritism to a 'giant corporation', and from 'bloated eastern manufacturers'. In his 1983 volume on the rebellion, *Riel and the Rebellion: 1885 Reconsidered*, Professor Flanagan attempted a re-assessment of the role of the federal government. In his version Ottawa is not the villain found in the traditional story and it should not be vilified as indifferent toward the Northwest. The Métis had no cause to rebel because the federal government did respond and was attending to their grievances. Flanagan's study, to say the least, is controversial — but *Prairie Fire* will have no part in any controversy on the causes of the rebellion or on the figure of Riel. Ottawa is granted only passing comment. The designation of Ottawa as a 'despotic authority' needing to be shocked out of its lethargy is accepted.

In place of analysis we are left with mere narrative, an anthology of grievances, and a profusion of detail on the military encounters. If this was the limited intention of the authors *Prairie Fire* is a success. The narrative is written in a lively manner and is easily read. But as a 'definitive' history of the rebellion it is both 'too much and too little'. It takes us through the bushes and the coulees but never tells us where we have been.

Hartwell Bowsfield is archivist and associate professor of history at York University, Toronto.

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